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JAMES LEE ELLENWOOD

Look at the "Y"!

By the Author of
THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

ASSOCIATION PRESS

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FOR

FRED I. ELDRIDGE

WHO, AS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
NEW YORK STATE COMMITTEE, GAVE ME
MY FIRST JOB IN THE Y.M.C.A.

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I

Introduction, with Warning

I WISH I could make the story that these pages tell as interesting to you as the Young Men's Christian Association actually is. Fundamentally that is my reason for trying to tell it. Here is a story of life and youth, with whom for nearly a century the "Y" has kept appointment. It has lived with young men and changed when they changed. I am not particularly concerned, in these pages, with the history of an institution or its future but I am vitally interested in the youth of one generation and another. If the Y.M.C.A. were to close its doors, I should not say at first, "What

must we do to get the 'Y' going again?" I should merely ask, "Now what is your community going to do with these young people?" This then is not a record of a particular type of organization edging its way into your city. Rather is it the tale of meeting young men when they need a friend. I hope you keep that in mind. Institutionalism is often boring business. Board meetings, reports, dates, statistics, trends, new techniques, charts, maps, diagrams, these I have minimized. In these paragraphs no one will arise to second a motion or make a report. No treasurer will announce, "I regret, gentlemen, that our income is .071 points less than in last October," and the chairman of the house committee will not recall that the pipe in the basement is about to spring a leak.

Of course people like pictures, and words may be tiresome. I suggest, therefore, an illustration. A boy trying to find a job, a young man with too much time on his hands, another boy puzzled about a girl, another young man with bad home relationships, another boy needing a clean place to hang around, clean fellows to hang around with, a young man dazed by the involvements of the economic slump and conscription, these will make a picture. Energetic, wandering youth, your boy and your neighbor's boy, let these be the illustrations.

I have tried, honestly, to keep this book from becoming an eulogy and if my enthusiasm gives you an idea that the Y.M.C.A. is perfect, I hope you will discount it. On the other hand, I have no doubt that some will feel that I do the "Y" poor service to point out, here and there, its possible shortcomings. But

shortcomings are interesting too and often pertinent. I have never met a perfect Y.M.C.A. secretary, a perfect Y.M.C.A. layman, a perfect Y.M.C.A. I knew a man once who had a large wart on his cheek, which had I think elements of attraction. He had his picture taken and upon receiving the proof was startled to discover that the wart had been mysteriously removed. He insisted on another sitting! In this book I have not retouched the portrait.

You will discover, also, that these pages are selective rather than comprehensive and give evidence of personal bias. In hopes of interesting you I have dealt chiefly with things that interest me. Quickly I plead guilty to leaving things out. This picture is an etching, not an x-ray.

Finally, I must insert that these pages will have scant reward for the statistician; for to me a boy is never a statistic, nor ten young men a decimal point. I doubt if students of social trends should spend time here, because I am ignorant of them, never knowing when one begins and the other ends, and what may be in the middle. Technicians, also, should stop at this very line because, though I admit their necessity and like them personally, I have no truck with them here. Social surveyors will mine no nuggets of wisdom because I am so prejudiced to the innermost need of youth that I am reluctant to be stayed by what happens to be the latest theory of social research.

Let no one of these worthy people say that I have not warned them. Let them keep at their important duties. Here is the tale of a boy and a young man, and, sometimes, a girl and a town and a building and

an idea. It is written for the Rothbergs, the Dunkers, the Hopkinses, the McTigues, the Somerses, the Wilbers, the Moores and the Winterses. But you will not know who they are until you read further. I hope you are interested.

2

The Postman Rings Once a Year

ONE March morning, postman Tom Murphy delivered nine identical letters to nine homes on Riverdale Avenue in Midville, New York. It could have been, however, any other postman or any similar street in practically any American city of over 15,000 population. In the upper left corner of each envelope was stamped a red triangle. Along the lines of the triangle were printed these words "Body," "Mind," "Spirit." The postman, whose son had recently got in and out of a tight spot at high school, knew what the letter was about as definitely as if it had been a

post card. "I hope they get their money," he said to himself.

Isaac Rothberg always opened his mail at breakfast. In former years he had read the morning paper but this was given up now for something less depressing. You don't like to read of your own race being humiliated and persecuted in so many parts of the world. In Midville there was some prejudice, of course, but it could be put up with. Jew or no Jew, he had tried to be a good citizen. He read the letter with the red triangle:

"DEAR FRIEND—

Shortly a worker in the annual Y.M.C.A. current expense drive will call for your contribution. If we were to raise all our money by the fees we charge, we should be keeping away from our building many who most need it. We therefore ask the community each year to subscribe about 20 per cent of our budget. We take the liberty of asking you for help because we believe you to be interested in—

- I. The boys of Midville.¹¹ Six hundred of them are in our membership, and through our leagues, clubs, and other activities, we reach 1,400 others. As you know, we do not limit our work to its paying members.
- II. The young men of Midville. They face serious situations in a day of social and economic uncertainty. Their problems of increased leisure time, vocational adjustment, moral and spir-

itual guidance are our concern. Now there is conscription with all its implications. At the present time we have programs and activities for 800.

I hope you will read the enclosed circular and find it possible to make a generous contribution.

Cordially,

JOHN S. SAXTON

Chairman of the Campaign

"That is a wise move getting such a well-known and popular man to head the drive," thought the practical Mr. Rothberg. He'd give them another hundred dollars, maybe more, depending on who came to see him. Why not? It was a good cause and he was trying to be a good citizen. Jews could be good citizens in spite of growing prejudice. The "Y" seemed free of that in many ways. His boy, Sam, was on the "Y" basketball team. He started his cigar. This prejudice now—was it because of the unusual business success of his race or were there other, deeper reasons? It was all very disheartening. But he must not become bitter. He sighed and opened another letter. "Again we ask help for our hospital—"

Mr. John R. Dunker, like the postman, knew what was in the letter without bothering to read it. It was another of those appeals from hospitals, Scouts, Salvation Army, Y.W.C.A., some other bunch. He was all fed up. He asked no favors of any of them. He, himself, was self-made, at least he thought so. (Of

course no one ever is, but Mr. Dunker didn't know that.) Besides, let the Government do these things. Taxes were high enough. Look what the schools cost. The hospitals charge enough anyway. People should help themselves. We do too much for people, anyway. "Take me, now, no one helps me." And so on. "There are so many appeals that I am not going to help any," was Mr. Dunker's peculiar logic. He was, you will note, a committee of one to aid and assist Mr. Dunker, so he threw away the letter. I do not judge nor do I criticize him. Surely he should not object to a summary of his philosophy, but he'll be mad when he reads it! Four or five solicitors will fumble over his pledge card before one brave soul will tackle him. This dauntless solicitor will visit or 'phone him with an ardent hope that no one answers.

Miss Minervia Hopkins was nearly eighty years old. She had a kindly soul and not much of a body. She sat in an old-fashioned chair in an old-fashioned room and pecked at her breakfast. Her secretary opened the letter and read it aloud. She said, "Just another appeal." Miss Hopkins reached for the folder with feeble fingers and said gently, "No, not just another appeal. My brother James was one of the earliest members, perhaps a founder. He was loyal to the 'Y' as long as he lived." She nibbled at toast. "I always pay for ten boys' memberships and I give all I can." Memories were crowding in. The first annual dinner her brother presided over, John R. Mott's visit to their home, the boys who asked her to fit up a club room, Fletcher Brockman's story of China told to

friends in this very house, boys at her brother's funeral, a young man who said, "He got me my first job." She looked over the folder again. There were pictures of boys in the gym, in the pool, around a table, groups of young men. She thought, "I'd have liked to have a boy." The toast grew cold—

People like these, they say, are passing out of the picture and will not be replaced. Not only is it almost impossible to build up large estates, but the people who make money are not the kind who give. I wouldn't know about that. I lean somewhat to a faith that there will always be folks like the Hopkinses.

Mrs. Mike McTigue sat across the breakfast table, slightly sleepy. Mike was a big and successful contractor but Mrs. Mike was not one to put on airs. Once he had been merely a mason. She dipped, I report reluctantly, her toast in the coffee—"What you looking at, Mike?"

Mike said, "A Y.M.C.A. folder."

"You going to give them anything?" He kept on reading. He had learned how to carry on a conversation with his wife and read at the same time. Otherwise he would never have been much of a reader. He said, "Sure."

"How much?"—uneasily.

"I don't know. I like the 'Y.' "

"Why?"

Mike laid the folder down—"Oh, I think it's a good place. I used to go there myself. Four or five of one

of my crews live there now. It keeps them decent. You got any objection?"

"Aren't they too much Protestant, Mike?"

Mike snorted. "It's for everybody. Didn't I say I used to go there?" Mrs. McTigue was relieved. She announced that corned beef and cabbage had been ordered for dinner. Mike said, "Now, Molly, you're talking sense!"

Mr. Arthur K. Somers was a member of the Board of Directors of the Y.M.C.A. He had other positions of leadership in the community, for he believed in accepting social responsibilities. People said he liked to be out in front and he probably did, but nevertheless he took seriously his many activities. He was proud of the folder but wondered if they were not trying to raise too much money. Times, he felt, called for economy. He disliked, intensely, asking his friends for money; but these civic organizations had to be supported. Without knowing a great deal of the "Y" program, he liked its secretaries and was sure that good was being done. Maybe he should give a little more. At noon he would attend the Rotary meeting, at night his Church Men's Club. One of the State "Y" men was speaking at both functions, Jim somebody or other. He hoped it would be a different speech. As he reached the sidewalk on the way to his law office, Mrs. Somers shouted something about an errand he had forgotten yesterday. She always shouted something about something as he reached the sidewalk. He pretended not to hear her. He always did that too. Something about the cam-

paigh had slipped his mind. What was it? Oh yes! He must remember to ask the general secretary if the "Y" trade was being divided wisely among the dealers. One of the coal men had kicked because he wasn't getting his share. Wouldn't you think his wife would say what she had to say before he left the house? Funny people, women. Maybe the coal dealer wouldn't give anyway—funny people, coal dealers.

Mr. and Mrs. William Wilber knew, deep in their hearts, that whatever they gave the "Y" would not be enough. They never thought of it without emotion. The reason, of course, was William, Junior. He, their only child, was doing all right now and had graduated from college and later the University. There had been a time, however, when things were difficult. Moments came back. It had started with his running away from school. Mrs. Wilber never forgot how she felt when the truant officer called. Later it was a policeman. Mr. Wilber would long remember his private interview with the City Judge. "Great heavens, Wilber, I am not going to put your boy in jail. He has been hanging around in the wrong place with the wrong crowd. The best man for your boy is Joe Williams, who works with kids at the Y.M.C.A. Take him over there." Mr. Wilber did take him.

What would a city do without men like Joe Williams? What would have become of his boy? Mr. Wilber always brought his check in person, always handed it to Joe. Mr. Wilber never mentioned the matter to Joe and Joe never spoke of it either. But

they both knew. Even now, Joe was writing the young man regularly. Once Mr. Wilber had offered Joe a job in his business. It would have meant much more money. Joe said simply, "I'd rather work with boys." Mr. Wilber was a little ashamed of himself.

Mr. Randolph Moore decided to give five dollars to the "Y." He always gave five dollars to everything. He felt, in a vague, detached way, that everyone should give something and, in a determined way, that it should not be very much. His technique was to send the check immediately before anyone called on him. Five dollars, even to every organization, was not high-voltage philanthropy for a man of Mr. Moore's income, but a curious philosophy lay behind the practice. He knew and often recalled the story of the widow's mite, as Jesus told it, and applied it to his own giving. The fallacy was, quite obviously, that by no stretch of anyone's imagination was he nor could he ever be considered a poor widow. Still as the treasurer of the "Y" said, ungrammatically, "Five dollars is five dollars."

Mr. Arthur Winters read the letter and enclosed folder with care. It involved for him real effort at composure. He was gray, stooped, feeble and only sixty-five. But you can't work day and night to build up a business to a state where all your dependents are provided for and your gifts to philanthropy are large, and then sit helplessly by as a prolonged depression wipes it all away—you can't do that and stay young. One year he had given five hundred dollars and was

glad to do it. And now, what's more, he was glad he had given it. On the whole, gifts like that had been his best investments. Mr. Winters was not bitter, only pained. Maybe he could squeeze out ten dollars but he was chagrined to send such a small gift. Still, he was sure they would understand, and he recalled that the whole city had been considerate. Five hundred dollars—now ten dollars. Really, he could not afford that. The house, his suit, his wife's clothes were looking on the worn side. Mr. Winters seemed tired. In all probability he would never know that when his ten-dollar gift was reported, a hard-boiled member of the board added a hundred to his ante but never told any one why. There is a story of a boy's gift of loaves and fishes multiplying. Remember?

I am sorry not to be able to report on the ninth letter. The name was misspelled and the envelope wrongly directed. Anyway, no one lived in the house. When a loyal worker, having trudged ten or twelve blocks to the little man who wasn't there, reported the mistake, he used much temper and little restraint. He said to the young lady in charge, "What kind of mailing lists do you have, anyway?"

The young lady replied, "One mistake in nine ain't bad, is it?" To which the solicitor, remembering that he was in the "Y," made no audible reply.

Of course there were more letters with accompanying reactions. There was the man who invariably pledged and rarely paid. There was the man who gave a bit just to stay in with the crowd. There was

the man who heard that Sherwood Eddy had spoken at the "Y" and would not support any Red organization. There were two men, one of whom thought the "Y" had too much religious emphasis, and the other of whom thought it had too little. There were hundreds who did not give because, fairly and honestly, they couldn't; and there were hundreds who gladly gave what they could. Thus, altogether, the drive "went over the top." Somehow or other the thing goes on.

I do not need to add that some citizens of Midville never did get the appeal. They wouldn't have been interested. The height of ostracism in a town is to be left off a list of possible contributors to good causes. That's something! However, this book is not an effort to raise money. It is, rather, an attempt to tell the story, now nearly one hundred years old, of an experience, of an adventure with youth, of boys and young men, of the postman's son, of Mr. Wilber's boy, of the young men who work for Mr. McTigue. It is a changing record, because times change, and a continuing one because there is always youth.

Each city has its own characteristics and the details of local patterns vary in different communities. Possibly in your town there is a wholesale drive with all organizations lumped into a Community Chest. But the design persists. The Y.M.C.A. in your city is one of a very large number, and before we get to any one in particular, we had better give it a national setting. I doubt if there could be just one Y.M.C.A. It draws its vitality from the entire Association. If in all the world there had been only one potato, it would never have loomed large in the history of agri-

culture. It wouldn't even merit plowing under! The "Y" is like that. What kept the first one alive is that, quickly, there were many others. People know about yours because there are more than a thousand others. Therefore, please turn to the next chapter.

3

Let's Look at Our Figures

QUICKLY, now, a few figures. To me they are more indicative of what the Y.M.C.A. could do than what it has done, more indicative of opportunities than achievements. You have to watch figures. Oddly enough, their significance is rarely numerical, particularly when they have to do with people. For instance, a department store in your town might advertise that 20,123 entered its doors last Monday. An alert stockholder, before being impressed, will ask, "How much did they buy?" Even then you do not have the final answer. An even more alert stock-

holder will inquire, "How many were so treated as to want to come back?" In this way, after intense scrutiny, you may find that a statistic becomes a person. Nothing can be more misleading than numbers. They should, I think, be kept strictly on the defensive.

Granting all this, every local Y.M.C.A. takes on deeper significance in a national setting, and figures are essential to clear understanding. Our Association is exceptionally adept in collecting and putting one digit after another, and, for the most part, sensible in defining their importance. Here are a few pertinent facts from our last *Year Book*. In the United States there are 1,316,573 members. That, according to the new census, means that one out of every 100 persons belongs to the Association. One out of a hundred may not seem impressive, but we don't go after the babies and their grandfathers, and we are, as yet, pretty much of a man's organization. Furthermore, a fair estimate is that we work with as many who are not members as who are. Anyway, we do get around; do meet up with an appreciable slice of the American people. If we could influence the lives of all as we do of some, our significance would be beyond description. There lies our finest opportunity and the suggestion of a chance to improve.

The *Year Book* Editor visualizes all our members sitting down at one table and estimates the size it would have to be. Its diameter would reach about 150 miles! If the members served a meal, which is one of our most common approaches to any problem, there would be needed such vast quantities of pot roast and cabbage salad, which are our most general

conception of a meal, that even the *Year Book* falters at factual compilations! We are, indeed, quite a host.

Nor do we stop growing. Our present membership is 400,000 more than it was in 1932, making an advance in that period of over 55 per cent. We seem to be putting new leaves in our fabulous table and are constantly drawing up more chairs. At this imaginary dinner youth, of course, predominates. Six hundred and twenty-three out of each thousand are under twenty-five years of age. Imagine the din when the adults join in one stupendous injunction, "Watch your table manners; please be quiet; don't reach for things; refrain from radical ideas; speak when you are spoken to; Quiet! Quiet!! Quiet!!! But maybe Y.M.C.A.-trained adults are not that way. Here's hoping.

The fact that this vast membership never comes together to sit at a gigantic table has forced the Association to become expert in the formation of strategic groups. This has become our way of living and our method of working. We had last year 112,732 groups of one kind or another. Some pursued their hobbies, which ranged from making airplanes to collecting stamps. Others were in athletic groups as socially minded as volleyball or as coldly aloof as weight lifting. There were classes to study nearly everything and committees to direct and promote in all directions. In the single year of 1939, we called these groups to meet 2,477,700 times.

The minutes of many of these meetings were, fortunately, never inscribed, or, providentially, have been lost. But the actual experience gained in pro-

motion, procedures, personal developments, and social living is no mean contribution to the democratic spirit at a time when democracy can stand all the practice it can get. Please keep in mind that no member has to do anything that he doesn't want to do, and that his likes and dislikes are the ultimate determinants of what is or is not done.

Three thousand six hundred and eight employed secretaries work hard, I hope, to keep this enormous program alive and interesting. Back in 1930 the number was 990 higher, which is one of the things the Depression did to the Y.M.C.A. We have, however, more than held our own since 1937.

As our work becomes more specialized and technical we have raised our secretarial standards in many ways. In some respects, as for instance, deep interest in the personal-work emphasis of our work, we have not improved greatly, but, remember, that was at a high point when we started nearly a hundred years ago. It gave us, in fact, our first impetus. We have improved our educational requirements until now a college education, or its equivalent, is the condition of certification. This does not do justice to all would-be secretaries, but it is a forward step. The median age of all the professionals is forty-two. Some people lift a cynical eyebrow at this. How can a movement, they ask, actually keep in touch with youth with half its secretaries over forty-two? The question is decidedly pertinent, but I am forty-nine and not the one to answer it. Nevertheless, I am willing to suggest that, to the extent that a secretary is primarily interested in, and currently informed about and ade-

quately trained to work with young people, he is fitted for service. To the extent that he isn't—he isn't. And that goes for big, little, and medium executives. (Incidentally, it's a swell test for laymen in the "Y," too.)

You will be interested to know that there are fifty-nine women secretaries in the Young Men's Christian Association, indicating that we are giving at least a nod to encroaching feminism, although, as a movement, it is with a certain shyness that we embrace the stranger sex. We will take this up later.

The median salary of these secretaries for 1940 is \$2,416 with a low of \$900 and a high of about \$12,000. Because each local unit is autonomous, and because the nature of our work varies to meet different conditions a proper spread of the \$9,753,800 secretarial wage is something that needs to be watched. (I am aware that I am slipping in some debatable propaganda among the figures and I hope you will excuse it.) A sum of nearly \$10,000,000 for secretaries attests to our size. Only a proper distribution can attest to our quality. Am I right? One of my concerns is that there is a tendency, not only in the "Y," but in schools, churches, and other similar institutions, toward too wide a margin as between the "executive" and the "program" secretary. How about a discussion in your board meeting sometime? I ought to add that an increasing number of Associations have intelligent personnel committees to handle such matters. About 20 per cent of our total budget goes for secretarial salaries.

Of course, we have other employees, too. Our

chain of more than 700 buildings across the country demand the attention of over 10,000 full-time, non-professional workers and more than 5,500 part-time employees. In 1939 they were paid more than \$12,000,000. At this point let me give you a statement of our labor policy as defined in the last *Year Book*. I am not claiming that it is always strictly adhered to. But one thing is sure, our leaders know that to stand in a community as a force for Christian character our organization must first apply to itself basic Christian qualities and principles. Here, then, is an attainment to achieve, if it has not already been accomplished.

“It is the sense of the National Board:

- “a. That the Y.M.C.A. in view of its purposes and claims as a Christian agency, should not be content merely to ‘follow the market’ in its labor policy, but should endeavor so to administer its personnel relationships as to merit a position of leadership toward the improvement of community personnel standards; and
- “b. That it regards the field of employee policies as a significant test of its Christian purposes and claims.
- “c. That in submitting these standards for study or adoption by local Associations, the National Board proposes that the International Committee adopt these objectives for its own practices and relations as an employer of non-professional workers.

"The foundation of an adequate and equitable policy governing the employment of non-professional workers:

- "a. *Wages*: Adequate wages should be paid, and wage scales should take into consideration the following: (1) local cost of living; (2) wages currently paid for similar work; and (3) any federal or state legislation that may apply.
- "b. *Hours*: The length of the working day and working week should be determined by reference to the best current practice and existing legislation. Overtime should be paid for at a rate determined by the same considerations. All employees should be entitled to one day's rest in seven and nationally recognized holidays, or equivalent time.
- "c. *Vacations*: Workers should be entitled to vacations with pay, at least after one year's service, if not before.
- "d. *Sick Leave*: Sick leave with pay, for limited periods, should be allowed to all regular employees after a year's service, if not before.
- "e. *Security*: Security against hazards of old age, unemployment, dismissal, sickness, accident, and death should be provided as far as possible through existing provisions under Association auspices (assuming continued exclusion from Federal Social Security and related coverages).
- "f. *Employment*: Jobs should be classified and, as far as possible, equated one to another on

the basis of skills and knowledge required. Regular lines of promotion or increment periods should be established. All recruiting, retention, and promotion should be administered on the basis of merit and efficiency without unfair discrimination on account of age, sex, race, or marital status.

“g. *Grievances*: Procedures for locating, airing, and promptly settling grievances and dissatisfaction are essential. Every employee has the right to a hearing whenever requested either in his own behalf or through any representative or representatives of his choice.

“h. *Group Expression*: Staff meetings should be encouraged, with a view to developing efficiency and pride in the job, increasing morale and self-respect, discussing mutual problems for mutual benefit, and sharing both opportunities and responsibilities.”

Now for a few dollar signs and I am reminded of a story. A mild-mannered Methodist minister had served a struggling rural church for many years. His annual salary had been eight hundred dollars. Harassed by debt and penury, he screwed up courage to ask his Board for a slight raise. Someone has suggested that “Board” is an apt word to describe many of the inner groups of control. It, too, is long and hard and narrow! Doubtlessly, this is a bit too severe on many fine boards, but in this particular story there was one member who merited the description. This more pious than generous brother waxed indignant

at the blatant presumption of a minister asking for a raise. "You are," he snarled, "supposed to be interested in souls, not money." Whereupon the mild servant of the church for once was moved to righteous anger and actually answered back, "Yes, I know I am supposed to be interested in souls, but I can't eat them and even if I could, yours wouldn't be much of a portion."

I commend this story to those who consider the Y.M.C.A. a commercial institution.

The Y.M.C.A. spends money and always needs more. It is not run for a profit, but it takes some cash to run even at a loss. It has a commendable reluctance toward accumulation of deficits. You may be surprised to learn that in 1939 the operating budget of the American Y.M.C.A. was nearly \$49,000,000, and that it was balanced with a couple of hundred thousand to spare. This puts us in a class with the most stable business and several points ahead of at least one well-known government. I must add, however, that we achieved this by meeting the requirements of good business management and not by meeting all the needs of the communities we served. Sometimes, I fear, we accept financial limitations too complacently. I am for balanced budgets, but I am against accepting them, in themselves, as evidence of a job well done. The most effective way of guaranteeing a balance is to spend no money at all. Nor am I deeply impressed with the idea that we must always "go over the top" in campaigns to keep up our morale. I think it would help the vitality of any philanthropic organization to say to its com-

munity once in a while, "Here are your needs. We will use all the money you give us in an attempt to meet them. What you don't pay for, you won't get." This takes more vision and courage and ultimately will command more support.

The editor of the *Year Book* pushes this \$49,000,-000 and 1,316,573 members to the last man and the final penny. For each member of the Y.M.C.A., \$35.25 is spent. In fees and dues he pays \$4.25; \$17.32 comes from business and club facilities; \$4.12 is paid in tuitions; \$1.07 is given him from endowments; and from miscellaneous sources 62 cents trickles in. (I wouldn't know what the miscellaneouses are, but, in a small way, they always manage to do their share.) And that leaves \$7.87 to be raised by voluntary contributions. That's where our friends come in. If the \$7.87 cannot be raised, we cannot serve the boys and young men who may need us most.

Finally, one more statistic. In buildings, endowments, and all other forms of assets the American Y.M.C.A. has \$255,000,000. Against this we owe \$31,000,000. These figures leave your author, a humble secretary saving up for a pair of pants to match last year's coat, slightly dazed. But it's fun to write about them anyway.

And here you have a decimal-point view of the money, members, and secretaries of the Y.M.C.A. We are an institution on a grand scale. I think we ought to be familiar with the total scope of our work, and have at least a speaking acquaintance with charts, maps, and tables. We should not become enamored of them, however; and when we read them a good

comment to make is, "So what?" I am trying to answer that one in succeeding chapters, but I am pausing in the next few pages to talk about our age. (Just to give perspective and a pattern.)

4

Big Moments

THIS chapter is a sort of time table in the journeyings of an idea. It lists some of the steps in our coming of age as a social agency. You won't remember the dates of course, but, thrown together, they tell an interesting story. Age and dates are convenient mechanics that take on value only as they associate themselves with worth-while events. Thus the longevity of Methuselah is hardly worth remembering. What did he do? But the few years that Jesus lived became the measuring point of all other periods. It is well to deal with dates briefly, to fix them with useful associations, and to go your

way without worrying over a couple of years one way or another.

The Y.M.C.A. began its life and work in London on June 6, 1844. Fifty years later, George Williams, its founder, was knighted for his service to young men. You will see his genial bewhiskered face in pictures in Association buildings over the world. When the "Y" started, the machine age was well on its way toward concentrating people in big, noisy, but alluring centers. Watt had invented the steam engine only seventy-five years before and the industrial revolution was born. Of course we are older than many of the inventions that, themselves, seem remote by now. At the time of our beginning there were no cables across the ocean, and the "Y" was thirty-two years old when Bell invented the telephone and two years older when Edison gave us the incandescent light.

When we were born Texas was not yet part of the United States and Polk was running for President on the "54-40 or Fight" issue. We were just one year ahead of the sewing machine and of the same age as anesthetics. (People who consider us slow may think of a pertinent comment on this coincidence but I don't seem to be able to suggest one.)

I have no desire to go sentimental so early in this book but I must make this final observation about the time of our birth. Just two weeks before the Y.M.C.A. came to life an historic scene was being enacted in the United States. In the Supreme Court Room in Washington, D. C., Samuel Morse was sitting before a curious gadget. On it he tapped out long and short

signals. Over in Baltimore an assistant was waiting, excitedly, for the message. The first words ever to go over the telegraph, as every one knows, were "What Hath God Wrought!" Humbly, in the light of all that followed, one may suggest the same exclamation as fitting for the meeting that launched the Y.M.C.A. two weeks later in London.

One year later, in 1845, we employed our first full-time leader and called him a "Secretary." Evidently we learned quickly that volunteer service was not enough. Literally we established a new profession and began to develop an increasingly specialized leadership. In the second year of our existence we fixed an early emphasis by forming a Sunday-afternoon Bible class for young men. This program feature flourished greatly but has not persisted to any great extent through the years. Some people mistakenly think that this signifies our loss of religion. This, of course, is not the case. Instead, we are working at it differently now, trying to give religious significance to all of our activities.

Shortly after this, when the "Y" was about seven years old, the design of its work began to take definite shape. As early as this, there emerge the two guiding principles that made us what we are. They are tremendously important, because they not only tell the story of the past, but they describe the most useful heritage from the past to the present. Here they are:

1. Geographically, the Y.M.C.A. accepts no limitations. All that it has ever seemed to ask is "Are there any young men about?"

2. Within the local field, it will enter every sphere of activity in which it can be of use. It will meet young men where they are.

Watch, now, this first conviction come to life, in the following list of dates. It's an idea spreading across the world. I omit the planning, convictions, delays, and disappointments. Men worked decades to bring the following schedule to life. If you have ever tried to promote one group in your city, let your imagination play around with this time table:

- 1844 First Y.M.C.A. in London
- 1851 It arrived in Canada
- 1851 A month later it came to Boston and United States
- 1852 Paris
- 1855 Australia
- 1868 Norway
- 1880 Japan
- 1883 Berlin
- 1890 International Secretary to South America
- 1893 Rio de Janeiro
- 1895 International Secretary to China
- 1896 To Ceylon
- 1897 Italy
- 1898 Cuba and the Philippines

That's enough to give the idea. The list is not complete—merely suggestive. In another chapter we will take up our work abroad. Now and then I meet an Association that is so self-centered that it sees no farther than across the street. Somehow or other

the Y.M.C.A. got hold of an idea that jumps oceans. To miss this fact is to miss half the fun and romance of its work. Hiram R. Flintface, board member of the Midville "Y," said, "We got all we can do right here in Midville. I'm not concerned with the rest." To which the reply is, "You'll do a better job in Midville, Mr. Flintface, and have more fun at it, if you know what the rest of the world is doing." But he may get mad if you tell him. How do I know? Because I did and he was!

Interesting, too, is to look over the years and watch the Association pursue its determination to meet young men in their own environment, where they need a friend the most.

If we had set out with a fixed formula and rigid program, the next list of dates would have been impossible. We did not grow by making up a program. Instead, we followed a young man. It's a meandering method of living, but it's the only real one. Here is what resulted. Again, the list is sketchy.

- 1846 Bible Class for young men—London
- 1856 "Down Town" prayer meetings—New York
- 1857 First "Y" work with students—University of Virginia
- 1866 First English Association building
- 1869 First two buildings with gymnasiums—San Francisco and New York
- 1869 Boys' Work!
- 1872 First Railroad Y.M.C.A.—Cleveland
- 1874 Work among German-speaking young men

- 1876 International Secretary for work with
Negroes
- 1881 Work with North American Indians
- 1885 Boys' Camps
- 1887 First secretary for Town and Country
Work
- 1892 First International Secretary for formal
education
- 1899 Naval Association—Brooklyn
- 1900 First Army Association—Governor's Island,
New York
- 1914 Father-and-Son movement began
- 1916 Start of international prison-camp work at
cost of one and one half millions annually
- 1917 War—Campaign for five million dollars in
May, fifty millions in November. We did
what was asked, got some criticism, made
some mistakes, did what informed people
now call an unprecedented piece of work.

There you have a few dates etching a picture of the "Y" in its formative years. I have barely mentioned our educational work, and said nothing at all of our program with men in industry. All I have tried to suggest is that in town or city, school, college, or at work, with buildings, gymnasiums, classes, and groups, at peace or in war, regardless of race, the "Y" has walked along with youth. Recreation, education, religion, make up the program. There emerges the Red Triangle: body-mind-spirit.

The last two decades have given us opportunity to perfect our methods. We have had to meet many

changing conditions. The Community Chest affects our financial program and a multiplicity of social agencies calls for careful planning. We, like everything else, ran into the depression. Our sheer bulk calls for many institutional adjustments. Now that pioneering gives way to intensification, it's harder to keep the glamor and romance of earlier years. The way to do it, of course, is to fix your eye on a boy or a young man as he comes in the Midville Y.M.C.A. He is our business. That's why we have the next chapter.

5

One Night at the Y.M.C.A.

IN THE previous pages I have tried to give an impression of the size of the "Y" and of how it has grown. It is now time to see the thing at work in one town. Because it is so easy to walk through a building and out again without catching its real significance, you will pardon, I hope, my gossipy comments. I know some members of our boards who never walk over the "Y," from top to bottom, just to see what's going on. This has always been hard for me to understand. To me it's terribly dry business, for instance, to read about 129 dormitory rooms, their

floor space, ventilation, and lighting systems; and I always feel sorry for a board member who has to deal with these mechanical properties and never meets the young fellow who has just moved in. I am not saying that he is not a good board member, but I am warning him that he is missing the fun of his job. The least interesting young man is more interesting than the most interestingly furnished room. Anyway, I am not taking you around the Midville "Y" to show you the building. I'd like you to meet the people in it.

Tuesday night. In the basement are the bowling alleys. Tonight the Trinity Methodists are meeting the First Congregationalists. The two ministers are there and one of them is a bit astonished not to recognize a couple of members of the team representing his church. The League serves a number of purposes, bringing men of different congregations together, creating interest in their respective Men's Clubs and (Let's be honest) making a little money for the "Y." One of the pin boys is saving his wages for a bike and the other is helping out on family expenses.

The world will not be regenerated by bowling alleys, of course, but they meet a need, and the "Y" runs them in a good environment. Believe it or not, a determining factor in a young man's life could be whether he bowls in a wholesome or an unwholesome atmosphere. If that sounds a little far-fetched to you, please remember that most of life's true stories are exaggerations.

By way of contrast, consider the Stamp Club toiling and spinning on the third floor. There are assorted stamps spread out on the table and the range of members is as odd as the various collections of stamps. They are all ages, sexes, intelligences, degrees of economic security. They discuss, argue, trade. Some of them are interested in the "Y," some are not, except as it houses their meetings. Joe Williams, Boys' Work secretary, is getting up nerve to ask them for a boys' scholarship for his summer camp. Maybe they will give it, absent-mindedly, but with good nature. The club meets once a month. In between, I assume, they collect and catalogue. Actually, I don't know. Next to the weight lifters, they puzzle me most.

Tomorrow forenoon, by the way, the Clergy Union will be meeting around the same table. (For the most part the ministers are co-operative with the Y.M.C.A.) After the ministers have made plans for a union Easter service, Dr. Herbert Moore, now down in the bowling alley wondering about the "ringer" on his team, will read a paper on "The Church in War-time." After his paper, the mothers of the Boys' Department will serve a fifty-cent lunch for fifty cents. There are sure to be pickles, carrots, peas, cabbage salad, and pot-roast, and there may be a few minor variations. The slim profits go to the Boys' Department. In the Midville "Y" there is no regular restaurant, although there is a small lunch counter used chiefly by dormitory occupants. Thanks to the machine age you can buy apples, gum, stamps,

candy, soft drinks, and soap and towels if you have the right change and drop it in the right slot.

Quite a serious as the ministers and as searching as the Stamp Club is the Hi-Y. I'd like you to know them well because they are the "Y" at its best. More than almost any other organization they catch up our objectives and methods. Recently a secretary, speaking to a group of fellow workers, said, "The Hi-Y is one of our most effective tools." Even for social workers, who outdo government officials in parading professional terminology, to refer to the seven thousand Hi-Y Clubs as a "tool" is something of a feat. From its beginning in 1889, this development has been one of the "Y's" finest achievements. The Midville Club, which is fairly typical, has a membership of about twenty high-school boys, who have just finished a bean supper. Bob Howland is president. He has a ninety average, which pleases his grandma; plays on the football team, which pleases his father; and is president of the Senior Class, which pleases his mother. The family has money. Last year's president was only an average student, perhaps because he worked three hours a day in the Midville Drug Store. His father is Bob Howland's father's chauffeur. There are not many cleavages at that age. What problems middle-aged people stir up!

I give you the Club's Statement of Purpose, recited this year by 200,000 young Americans: "To create, maintain, and extend throughout the School and Community high standards of Christian character."

It is fair to say that these Hi-Y members are a point or two above the average run of High Schoolers but they are by no means immune to the average temptations of their years. They take themselves seriously and, in most schools, are officially recognized and given responsibilities. They conduct all sorts of discussions on war, vocation, girls, politics, and religion. Each club has a leader and often a faculty advisor. In Midville it's Harold Smythe, Mathematics teacher and Harvard man who has kept the common touch. He was discovered by the alert Joe Williams, Boys' Work secretary, who organizes some kind of club every time he finds a good leader. All the clubs are part of a state and national organization, which arranges for regional conventions. Here, as you will quickly recognize, is intelligent citizenship in the making. However, I am at this point impelled to report that Abner Gruff, member of the board, never saw the Hi-Y meet, and couldn't recite their "purpose" to save his life. His son Charley was made a member recently and was describing their initiation, which, undoubtedly, is the best ritual the "Y" has. "What's the Club all about?" his father wanted to know.

"Gee," said Charlie, "You're on the board. You should know."

"That is the Boys' Department," retorted Abner.

Charlie explained patiently. He thought, "The old man acts a little dumb. Can you imagine him not knowing the Hi-Y?"

The House Committee is also having a meeting.

Three members are present, a contractor, an architect, and an insurance man. Three matters are on the agenda. The bowling alleys should be repaired at a cost of \$437.55. Yes, that is the minimum. No, they cannot go another year. Yes, the alleys show a profit. No, there is no provision for the repair in the regular budget. Item two. Dormitory rooms on the fourth floor need to be done over, also some new furniture should be provided. Yes, there is need for rooms. No, they won't rent in their present shape. Yes, the rooms repaired a year ago are amortizing the cost. No, there is no provision in the regular budget. Item three. The City Health Authorities are increasingly particular about swimming pools. No, as yet we are not violating regulations. Yes, we will have to make changes. No, there is no provision in the regular budget. Meeting adjourned.

Tomorrow night in the same room where the swimming pool is being considered, the Personnel Committee, five men, will have a session. The general secretary will hand out this list of items to be considered:

1. Shall we recommend that an assistant in the Physical Department be secured?
2. One of our secretaries feels that he can no longer keep up his retirement payments. What should we do?
3. The janitor wants a raise.
4. One of our secretaries is eligible for retirement shortly. What should we do?

5. Should we pay part of expenses in Summer School for our men who want to go?
6. Conscription may mean the loss of some of our employees. What shall be our policy?

Adjournment

The Phalanx Club has eaten in Parlor C. It has thirty-one young-men members. They are a social, educational, discussion group. They have a speaker every week, on all kinds of topics. They and similar clubs are for young men what the Hi-Y Club is to high-school students. They have state and national Assemblies. Most of the members have jobs, girls, and other problems. We have been slow, as a Movement, in working this field, but there is an upward trend now. Tonight a doctor is talking on "Social Diseases." Where we have one such club we should have twenty.

There's a "Public Affairs" group in Room M, where a red-hot forum is going on. The subject is "How Much Help Should the United States Give Great Britain?" The chairman, who is a young lawyer, feels that if things get any hotter, he, himself, is going to need help whether Great Britain gets any or not. There is a young pacifist in the group, and he is backed up by a young minister. But there is another young fellow, who is for intervention, and he has the backing of another young minister who intends to become a chaplain in the army. A young economist joins the *mêlée* to suggest that England is our first line of defense, and everything we do for her now will

save us money later on. There are fourteen present, and the group is the result of a national Y.M.C.A. emphasis on public affairs and an enlightened citizenship. Even if more heat than light is being generated just now, things will cool off; educational materials, supplied by the National Committee, will be used; information will supplant inflammation; everyone will know more about the other fellow's point of view; and no furniture will be wrecked. Sprinkle thousands of these groups throughout the country and you have the makings of intelligent democracy. Next week the group will have a go at "Our Part in the Orient."

Drop in on the public speaking class. The Midville "Y" does not go in for many formal education classes. There are, to be exact, only three: radio, salesmanship, and public speaking. Many Y.M.C.A.'s actually conduct college and university courses, but in Midville the need is met by other groups. However, public speaking classes spring to life quickly and go on much after the manner of public speakers. (I suppose you know that Dale Carnegie had his beginnings in the "Y.") Tonight a clerk from the corner cigar store is giving a five-minute address on "Does Social Security Kill Self-initiative?" Later, other members of the class will criticize his efforts. The teacher is a young lawyer who is paid ten dollars per class, which he turns over to his wife. He made a speech to her one time, appealing for the privilege of keeping half the money. She still keeps the ten

dollars, which may explain why he is experimenting with a new technique.

Finally, the Foremen's Club is in session and presents as it meets one of the "Y's" most fruitful ventures. The Midville Club is recruited from people in industry who are foremen or have a supervisory job of some nature. Always the "Y" has felt that industry was a fine field for its work. You can't divorce a young man and his job if you want to be real. Years ago we had religious shop meetings. Later we dealt with younger men and boys in "Find Yourself" campaigns across the country. Now we serve efficiently in guidance programs and in many thousands of interviews. The Foremen's Club is the most popular feature. Tonight a man is talking on "Safety Measures." Next month the subject will be "Relationships." Running along with these general meetings are more intensive groups studying shop management in all its phases.

In these days of strain, it's difficult to overestimate the importance of our industrial program. It, too, is developing rapidly. The president of the Midville Club is Charley Covella, who is a foreman in one of Midville's industries. He is no figurehead and his club is a self-determining group. Before he joined it, he thought that all the "Y" does is to run a gymnasium. Lots of people make the same mistake.

And that makes up the Tuesday night list at the "Y." Of course, the gym was busy, and the pool tables, and the reading lounge, and the radio, and the swimming pool, and the card tables, and the dor-

mitory rooms. Thus, in each of the seven hundred and thirty buildings, do more than a million and a quarter members divide into large groups and small groups and individuals. Some buildings are big ones with hundreds of employees; some are made-over residences with a staff of one or two secretaries and a janitor. Some Y.M.C.A.'s have no building at all—just a secretary. It is really amazing how much of the general pattern carries everywhere at a given time.

I thought you might be interested in an actual time table of one day in one building. I asked the membership secretary of the Downtown Branch of the Rochester Y.M.C.A. to give me a typical schedule, and I warned him not to pick out an unusual one. Here it is. The comments with each schedule are his.

SAMPLE DAY AT CENTRAL "Y"

DAY	TIME	GROUP	DEPARTMENT	TYPE
Mon.	10:00 A. M.	Fellowship Group	Outside	Clergy
	12:15	Public Relations Committee	Metropolitan	Committee
	12:15	Methodist Ministers	Outside	Clergy
	12:15	Household Paper Products	Sales Group	Sales Group
	12:15	Mental Hygiene Society	Outside	
	12:15	Telephone Co. Executives	Outside	
	12:15	Wranglers	Outside	Clergy Discussion
	7:00- 8:30	Male Chorus	Membership	Skill
	5:30	International Relations	Men's	Commission

DAY	TIME	GROUP	DEPARTMENT	TYPE
	8:00	Emanons	Boys'	Friendship Club
	8:00	Phi Beta	Boys'	Hi-Y Club
	8:00	East Hi-Y Commission	City Boys'	Council
	6:00	Loyalty Commission	Outside	Church Group
	8:30	Recreational Leadership	Young Men's	Skill Quest
	8:00	First Aid	Young Men's	Skill Quest
	8:00	Air Hoppers	Young Men's	Skill Quest
	8:00-10:00	Gamma Chi Rho	Young Men's	Friendship Club
	8:00-10:00	Phalanx Alpha	Young Men's	Friendship Club
	5:30- 8:00	Fed. of Men's Bible Classes	Men's	Inter-church Group
	5:30	Hi-Y Committee	City Boys'	Committee
	5:30	Em-Y Committee	Boys'	Committee
	6:00	Membership Committee	Member	Committee
	6:00- 8:00	Civil Aeronautical	Outside	Examination
	7:00-11:00	Y.M.C.A. Inter-church League	Social	League

24 Groups (8 Outside; 16 Association) Attendance 572

"This is a Monday in January. Other days are as busy with other groups. In addition to this, we have about 320 dormitory men going in and out each day, plus several hundred using billiard room, lobby, cafeteria, barber shop, etc.

"We estimate that there are between 2,500 and 3,000 persons using the Central 'Y' each day of the year."

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

TIME	CLASS	TYPE
12:15-12:45	Beginning Swimming	Seniors & Business Men
12:30-12:50	Noon Class	Seniors & Business Men
12:50- 2:30	Volleyball	Seniors & Business Men
2:30- 3:00	Informal	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
3:00- 4:30	Hi-Y Sports League	High-school Boys
3:00- 3:30	Jr. High Swim	12-15 years
4:30- 5:15	Informal	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
4:30- 6:30	Badminton	Business Men
5:30- 6:00	Gym Class	Office Men, Lawyers
6:15- 6:35	Gym Class	Business Men
6:35- 8:00	Volleyball	Business Men
6:35- 7:15	Boys' Gym Class, Jr. Em-Y-A	Underprivileged boys 12-14
7:15- 8:00	Jr. Em-Y-B	Underprivileged boys 12-14
7:15- 8:00	Jr. Em-Y-A Swim	Underprivileged boys 12-14
8:00- 8:30	Jr. Em-Y-B Swim	Underprivileged boys 12-14
8:00- 9:00	Medical Exams	All Men & Young Men
8:00- 8:20	Young Men's Class	Intermediates & Young Men— Calisthenics
8:00-10:00	Strength Club	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
8:00-10:00	Handball Club	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
8:00-10:00	Squash Club	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
8:20-10:00	Fencing	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
8:20-10:00	Apparatus	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
8:20-10:00	Tumbling	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
8:20-10:00	Wrestling	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
8:20-10:00	Basket Ball	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior
8:30- 9:00	Swimming Class	Intermediates, Young Men, Senior

"On this particular day, Monday, January 22, 1940, 12 business men used the individual exercise room; 14 persons obtained the punching bag from the locker box; 14 different men played badminton. A total of 106 different men played handball, 17 played squash and 60 played basketball, informally, in either the small or large gym when they were free. First aid for minor cuts and bruises was given to 4 persons."

6

Getting Personal

II HOPE that by now we have got this story safely out of the realm of big figures and world-wide scope right into the groups in the average Y.M.C.A. But we are not personal enough yet, by a long way. It is not our end and aim to organize groups. We are interested in people. In fact, we are at our best when we are interested in one person. Right now a statistic has to become a boy or young man, or else nothing of any consequence at all. In the previous chapter it was noted that between 2,500 and 3,000 people came to Rochester Central each day of the year. It may seem

ungracious of me to ask, "So what?" but that is exactly the question that the Rochester Y.M.C.A., or any other good one, asks itself. One may have come in to buy a "coke," another to get a drink of water, another to withdraw his membership, another to sell insurance. Some of them, probably, shouldn't have come in at all. One may have been a young man in serious trouble, out of work, seeking the advice of a friendly secretary, and this one might well add up to forty or fifty of the others.

And now a true illustration. Some years ago an alert secretary helped an "underprivileged" boy to a "Y" membership. "I" is added to the statistics. Watch now what happens. This "I" became so interested that he wanted to go to college and then work in the "Y" himself. He went and did become a secretary. "I" is added to secretarial statistics. In a little while he had formed a group of poor boys in New York City on the fringe of Hell's Kitchen. Of this group one became a minister, another a missionary, another a Y.M.C.A. secretary, another an outstanding camp director and another a successful business man, who serves as an unusually useful layman in Boys' Work. It's only a guess, of course, but I would say that the original one equals an ultimate five thousand!

All of this is why I insist on your meeting some young men in the Midville "Y"; for instance, Bud Hastings. He is in Room 319 on the second floor of the dormitories. He is twenty-two, graduated from high school in a western state, and is now a plumber in the employ of Mike McTigue, who got one of those

finance letters in the first chapter. He got his job with Mike a year ago, was a good worker, well paid. Shortly after he came, he began knocking around with a crowd that was not doing anyone any good. He got to gambling and on a couple of occasions had to get advances from his boss. Mike urged him to move in the "Y." Bud was not too enthusiastic about it, but did it to please Mike. The dormitory secretary, who in Midville is also the membership secretary, tried to get Bud into one or two night classes, but Bud was not interested in radio, salesmanship, or public speaking. He felt no need for any of this in his life and may have been right. However, everyone has a weakness, and he became, believe it or not, a weight lifter. He seemed to be enthralled by their precision and power. Heretofore, he had looked on the thing as merely "picking 'em up and laying 'em down." Maybe the fact that he had to handle pipes and wrenches made him vulnerable. He practised by the hour. I imagine the first event of real social importance in his life took place as a result of a visit to Room 319 by the dormitory secretary. Bud still felt that he was an outsider, and looked with suspicion on efforts to tie him into the program. There was to be a dinner in the young men's department and the committee was asking young fellows to speak briefly about their own hobbies. They needed someone to represent the weight lifters. Would Bud do it? Here was an attack in a vital part. Bud agreed.

Later at the dinner he stammered miserably through five horrible minutes. By this time he could throw weights around with grace and ease, but words had

him stumped. He perspired more than he ever had in the gym. The next day he looked up the dormitory secretary and asked, "Say, how much does it cost to join the public speaking class?" He was blushing furiously when he signed up. The secretary said to himself, "I must work at this method a little more."

A month ago, Bud met a girl at the joint Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. dance. She is pretty, doesn't chew gum, makes up sensibly and is a cashier in Ye Olde Eate Shoppe on Main Street. Bud eats there regularly now although he misses the more hardy menus of Mac's Lunch Counter. He was about to propose when "conscription" altered the scheme of things in the life of every young man. So I don't think he has done anything about it. Any night, however, he may tell her about the public speaking class. What keeps him back was the strange look on the face of his boss when he broke the news to him. For Bud Hastings the "Y" has done these things. It has given him a home, a hobby, recreation, social contacts, a chance to express himself. It was a factor in straightening him out morally and it has been, in the best sense, a friend. To do and be all this, the Midville "Y" has had the experience of nearly a hundred years.

Down the hall in 364 is John Buckley, who drifted into town about a month ago. At twenty-three years of age he has no trade, no particular training. He has no near relatives and his fortune is seventy-four dollars left from his mother's estate. She had wanted him to stay home with her until she died. Now and then he had worked at temporary jobs but his main task so far had been to look after his mother. He

buried her in a little village a hundred miles away, packed his few belongings, came to Midville, and ended up at the "Y." Where else? He is looking for work desperately. Fortunately, he has no bad habits, but his appearance is not the best and he is a poor mixer. The "Y" is trying to get him around with some of the other fellows but without success. Actually, Buckley needs a great deal more attention than he is receiving, but you know how it is with everyone being so busy. The dormitory secretary senses a problem and wonders about the way out for all the John Buckleys everywhere. The other night he spoke to a business man about a job for John. The business man said, "Young men drift on and on without doing anything for themselves. I can't understand it." The next day the dormitory secretary said to John, "Would you like to earn a couple of dollars addressing envelopes?" John answered, "I'd do most anything for two dollars." Maybe the business man wouldn't understand that either. Well, here's hoping for the John Buckleys. Conscription may get him and it would probably be a good thing. If the dormitory secretary had more time, if a good vocational guidance man were available, if people were talking less about the "lost generation" and were specifically helping one here and one there, young Buckley might be saved. Public relief, of course, is always available, but rarely does it become constructive. Because there are masses of these problems, we are trying to solve them all by mass solutions. It would be a good trick but no one is doing it.

Charley Wright, in Room 490, has a more hopeful

story. He is twenty-three, has a B. S. degree, works for the telephone company. He is a well-adjusted young man. He takes exercise, goes to church twice a month, has a girl, and is due for a promotion. He is on the Y.M.C.A. committee for young men's activities and treasurer of the Young Republican Club. He is in no way a problem, nor is life one for him. He knows John Buckley and can't understand how a young fellow would permit himself to drift into such a mess. He doesn't know about John's mother.

Over in a secluded corner of the lobby of the Midville "Y" Bud Burnell is listening to the radio. I'd like to tell you about him in a little more detail, because in his situation are caught up a number of factors that enter in the lives of many young men. Bud has been in Midville only a few weeks. He lived with his parents in Brooklyn until last winter, when his father died. Mrs. Burnell kept her home until Bud finished high school and then the two of them came to her parents' home in Midville. There was no money available for further training for Bud, but he is a willing worker at any kind of a job. I don't know how Joe Williams, Boys' Work secretary, happened to meet the young man, but somehow or other, he is always doing it. He got Bud a job in a factory. Bud seems to be making headway there, but adjustments at home are difficult. His mother has not recovered from last winter's experiences, and his grandfather and grandmother are feeble and, in truth, a bit of a problem. Bud spends his evenings out. I do not know how long it has been since you were a young

man, and quite possibly, you do not know Midville, so let's put down a list of places where Bud can go.

1. *The movies.* Bud goes once a week, sometimes twice. I forgot to tell you that Bud gets \$14.50 a week. He pays his mother \$7.00. Movies cost 40 cents.
2. *Pool rooms.* Bud tries them, but they cost money and Bud does not like the chaps who always seem to be hanging around there.
3. *Road houses and cafes.* Often they involve a car, and always too much money. Bud lost two dollars in a slot machine in one of them; it was interesting, and he has been tempted to try to win it back but he remembers his father, who didn't like such things.
4. *To a girl's house.* Bud likes this; he is at present interested in two girls. He met one at church and the other was not exactly the sort you would meet at church. Girls don't want to sit around the house. Bud's father used to call on his mother and they would sit in the parlor while the old folks kept discreetly in the background. Now girls want to dance, roller skate, or ride around. Remember Bud is making only \$14.50.
5. *Church.* Bud is slightly interested, and goes to the Young People's group on Sunday evening.
6. *The Y.M.C.A.*

Well, there's the problem. And here are five questions about Bud to be answered only in the developments of the next few years.

1. Will he handle the girl situation creditably?
2. Where will he get the incentive to work for promotion in the factory?
3. How will he work out his home adjustments?
4. Will drinking or gambling get the best of him?
5. How about his health—mental, moral, spiritual?

I am not preaching about this, understand. I am only facing up to Bud's situation with all its implications. What actually happens to him will depend on a number of things. Will his girl be the right kind? Will he hang around with right or wrong chaps? How good has his home training been? Is the foreman at the factory a human being or a dumb driver?

It is amazingly easy to list the things that could make Bud a happy and useful member of society. Guidance, helpful atmosphere, wholesome recreation and pastime, good working conditions, a friend. Much easier is it to list them than to provide them. Glancing at him as he listens to the radio, you could overlook him entirely as a person, so unobtrusive are the critical problems to a casual observer. Strange that all these issues stir in a boy's life and so many people don't see them. Quite often his grandmother says to Bud, "Wear your rubbers," as though rubbers could see a fellow through the problems of life. Organizations are like that, too; even the "Y" sometimes. They look at a fellow and see merely a suit of clothes.

The chap reading the *Saturday Evening Post* is Chuck Jennings. He graduated from college, lives

at home, and works for his father, who owns a gas station. He expects to take the business over. He is a trifle blasé, not at all puritanical. His father had high ambitions for him at first, but Chuck was no student. He is a good man around the gas station. He will get married anytime now. He comes to the "Y" twice a week for handball and a swim. The dormitory secretary sat down beside him and said, "Do you know John Buckley?"

"No."

"He is in the dorm. Can't get a job. He is living on a little money his mother left him. Couldn't use him at the gas station, could you?"

"Is he any good?"

"Never had a chance. But we got to do something for him!"

Chuck was interested. He said, "We will all be in the army soon, anyway. But send him over in the morning. I'll speak to the old man. He's got a heart."

I don't know how it came out. But it keeps going on and on, and you can't understand the "Y" unless you hear of things like this. At the next board meeting the general secretary will report: "We have 84 per cent occupancy in the dormitory." What a strange way to refer to Bud Hastings, the young plumber who lifts weights and is becoming a public speaker; or to John Buckley, who gave up his career to stay with his mother; or to Charley Wright, the rising young Republican! The general secretary will continue: "We have a new radio in the lounge." And not a word about Bud Burnell, who comes in to listen

to it! Nor will the adventure of the gas station be recounted. Of course, sometimes these stories do break through and even if they do not, I would not blame the secretary. After all, most of this stuff is too intimate to report. (That may be why it is often boring to meet with boards.)

Once, when one of our children was very young, I gave her quite a lecture for something she did or didn't. I must have been too dramatic. Anyway, when I finished she appeared reluctant to have me stop. She looked up and said, "Please tell me a story about a real live person, Daddy." And that, I think, would be a swell retort for a board member to make after a purely statistical and financial report.

I almost forgot to tell you about Alfred Green. He is reading a radical magazine, which, I hasten to report, is his own and would not be found in the Y.M.C.A. racks. He is sore because the radio is going. What nonsense! Alfred puts up with the "Y" because he likes to talk in the forums, but looks with intense disfavor at its capitalistic leanings. He likes the comfortable chairs and good lights (which would be paid for if the "Y" were a little more capitalistic than it is). Alfred once approached Charley Wright of the telephone company and let loose a mighty tirade at all public utilities. Charley looked at him with pity. He said, "You're nuts."

Alfred said, "Yah?"

Charley said, "Yah!"

Alfred couldn't think up an answer to that one.

All of this is merely a sampling, which could go on almost endlessly. Neither of the two chaps playing

pool got through high school. They live across the tracks, got twelve-dollar-a-week jobs through the "Y" employment bureau, and have no ambition in particular. The young man who has a small news stand near the entrance is blind. He is a courageous fellow, well liked, who works part time in a piano factory. The young man registering at the desk is a transient who can have a room for seventy-five cents if he has a membership card from his home town. The customer spending a nickel at the soft-drink machine is taking a six-months course at the Midville Commercial Institute. Here and there are a clerk in the bank, a young policeman, a bookkeeper, a young mechanical engineer, and the fellow in the corner sells carpet sweepers from door to door. He is a week behind in his room rent because he thinks he knows horses.

Well, there they are as you and the "Y" meet them. I do not know how carefully the field of young men in your community has been studied and surveyed. You can come to a rough estimate of their number if you will divide your total population by seven. After that classification is difficult. Some have been spoilt by too much money; others do not know where next week's board is coming from. Some have fine, helpful homes and parents. Others have heart-breaking family difficulties. Some have a religious background, but not all by any means. All of them need jobs, homes, friends. They are the crowd that vast amounts of advertising and propaganda are aimed at. Political parties and cigarettes, isms and clothes-factories, churches and chewing gum, radicals

and razor makers, betting machines and night schools, hair tonics and distilleries—all of them work for converts. Your business is gone if you can't sell to youth. Most emphatically, it's that way with the Y.M.C.A. too.

For obvious reasons, I have not given real names in this chapter, but I must insist that, although Alfred Green and young Buckley live only in these paragraphs, there are thousands like them. Experience and equipment and trained leadership enable the "Y" to work itself helpfully into their lives and careers with effective persistence. The last illustration, which I now cite, comes accurately from the records, to illustrate the range of Association activity.

As a boy of twelve, young X went to a "Y" camp. He lived in a rural village, but the "Y," located at the county center, reached out for country boys. One year later, when X went to the county center because there was no high school in his home village, it was natural for him to join the "Y." He was away from home, a country kid in every particular, freckled, with a suit that didn't fit, lacking self-assurance in a city. At the "Y" he got what he needed. When he went to New York for the first time to enter college, it was the most natural thing for him to join up with the University "Y." To help pay expenses he worked three hours a day in one of the city "Y" branches. When he finished his schooling and had become a minister he quickly learned that the "Y" knew boys and how to handle them, so he sent the youth in his church to it. By this time, he had married a girl he met at a social function at his college "Y."

Came the first World War, and X was a Navy chaplain on a transport. Under him was a "Y" secretary. X was never influenced by the complaints and propaganda directed against the "Y" during and after war time. As a chaplain he appreciated that, although the "Y" didn't have stuff to give away, they did furnish free the movies and the games and the writing paper and periodicals. This seemed to X far more useful than handing out free cigarettes. After the war he went back to his church, but his interest in youth finally drew him back to the Y.M.C.A., for which he now works.

I have told this story in the simplest way possible, without any embellishment, because, after all, it is a very ordinary story. It illustrates only one striking thing: namely, the ability of an organization to weave itself into the life of a boy, in town or country, school or college, in peace or war. I'd like to report that X was worthy of all this and is a model secretary, but concerning that, I have serious misgivings. As to factual accuracy, you can take my word. You see, X is, ungrammatically, me.

7

The Big Idea

SOME movements and organizations start out with a definitely fixed idea of what they aim to accomplish and a clear conception of a program to pursue. They build a method that changes very little either from time to time or from place to place. The "Y" is not like that. It has been so inept at stating its purposes and so vagrant as to method that some people have wondered if there really is one central dominating idea that permeates all the activities. Sometimes, when the "Y" has paused to define its goal it has become entangled in phrases that do not seem to have

much connection with what the rank and file of Associations busy themselves about. This sense of a unified effort is not helped any by our organizational set-up. Every local unit is independent of every other and is quick to assert its autonomy. Gladly they all come together to make convention pronouncements. Whether these get enforced back home is another matter. We need to do a lot more work about this.

Therefore it is a tribute to the validity and vitality of the central idea that the "Y" co-ordinates its work as well as it does. Anyway, I think we should now discuss the central purpose of the "Y" as you have seen it work in the two previous chapters. In my attempt, I fear I have ignored too much the different historical bases of membership and the theological statements of purpose. Instead, I have preferred to look over the record of ninety-six years and ask simply "What has the Y.M.C.A. been trying to do?"

I think that we can explain in one brief sentence a simple and practical statement of what we are and what we are trying to do. It is this: **THE Y.M.C.A. IS A FRIEND OF YOUTH.** It says, "Here are some things that the boys and young men around here need. They don't seem to be getting them anywhere else. That's our purpose."

I hope you will not think I have understated or oversimplified the matter, but I desire to begin this consideration at its most central point. And "friendship" is a great word, inclusive, impelling, motivating. To pursue a program of real friendship is to go everywhere and do almost everything. Only as you keep a clear concept of this aim do you understand the

working of the Y.M.C.A. The Red Triangle comes quickly to attention to suggest the breadth of its interest: "Body"—"Mind"—"Spirit." What a range! You see, I am speaking of a term that accepts no limitations.

I am utterly against special pleaders who would narrow the concept of our relationships with young men. For instance, I always squirm a little when the candidate for district attorney, speaking at one of our annual dinners, goes off into gloomy statistics about youth and crime and intimates, by way of compliment, that the "Y" is the answer. I doubt it and I think he doubts it. We certainly make a contribution along that line but we are not a crime-prevention bureau. I dislike to have us described as one just as I would not like to hear my relationship with my son defined as a prolonged effort to keep him out of jail. I, myself, went to the "Y" as a boy; but if I had suspected that a secretary was saying about me, "Here is a boy we can save from crime," I would have quit promptly and permanently. The "Friend" idea is, I am sure, much better, and I am against the emphasis on crime even if it gets contributions!

Neither have I any use for ultra-conservative Y.M.C.A. speakers who refer to us too glowingly as an agency to teach young America to stand by the old and tested ways of a cherished yesteryear. "I have never heard," shouted one of these speakers in my hearing, "of a radical in the Y.M.C.A." I could have told him of a few. The friendliness of our Association needs to and does cut across all shades of political conviction. It would be unfortunate were we to

harbor only the conservatives. The young radical needs a friend too. In fact, the trouble with many of our young radicals is that they never had friends enough.

This conception of friendship, early in our history, established a primary principle of operation: that of meeting young men in their own environment, at the points of their urgent interests and needs. If you will turn back to the chapter on dates you will see how it has operated through the years. In working with youth, you can't stand off and theorize; you don't give imperative directions; you don't pontificate. Jesus himself appreciated this ageless truth and, as a result, was upbraided for consorting with the wicked. All the equipment the Y.M.C.A. owns and the amazing variety in its program grow out of this determination actually to live with youth. *[I linger on the point because it is exceedingly significant; in fact, most of this book merely illustrates how important it is.]* There is no more futile Y.M.C.A. than the one so controlled by adults that it becomes an organization to be tolerated by mild-mannered youngsters rather than accepted by independent youth as, literally, part of themselves. The way to avoid this is to give them more to say about what the "Y" should say and do.

The temptation to suppress youth is subtle. Very old folks consider their middle-aged children as still needing attention; middle-aged people are exceedingly reluctant to consider their sons and daughters as grown up; and older boys and girls assume a condescending attitude to children. I'm that way, myself. Aren't you? We are like the superior adult who

said, "Youth is such a wonderful thing that it seems a shame to waste it on young people." I do not deny that with age comes experience and often wisdom. The task is to apply the wisdom in terms realistic to youth. The art and science of one generation helping another begin at this very point. Assuming that we have the wisdom, they have the needs. The twain must meet.

Organizations, particularly in the field of character development, have not always been expert in applying this principle. It is not easy to overlook our own desires in an effort to fit a program around others. Commercial concerns are more clever at it. At great expense they discover our actual needs and shape their products to them. When they deal with non-essentials, they do their best to make us believe we need them. "You need our product if you want to keep your hair in, your teeth white, your stomach peaceful, and your waistline under control."

In its first few years the "Y" sensed the need of meeting youth where they were. At the beginning the place was a room, or two rooms. Born in a strong religious atmosphere, the "Y's" early emphasis was evangelistic. Quickly it expanded, with no great pride in bigness but with a determination to follow youth. Because young men like sport, games, exercise, and competition the gymnasium came into being as its major piece of equipment. (Incidentally, basketball was invented by an instructor at Springfield Y.M.C.A. College.) When youth left home to come to urban centers, the day of the dormitory and enlarged social facilities began. When specialized

training was needed, and city education systems were not providing it, our night schools met the emergency. Right now we have everything from machine shops to universities. And in the depression years we moved out into more intensive efforts at vocational guidance and placement.

Some Y.M.C.A.'s ignore this genius for innovation and fall into easy ruts. Live ones are constantly alert to changing youth in a changing world. This definition of the Association purpose is dynamic, not passive, and it calls for constantly changing programs. The "Y" genius has been its quick adaptability. Amazing it is how few patterns carry over from decade to decade. Always in our lobbies are a few oldsters who complain, "In our time it was different." Mrs. Blank of Midville writes, "I am not subscribing to your organization any more because you have lost your religion." Here and there one objects to dancing, and Midville is having a not too Christian argument about using the tennis courts on Sunday. Both Mr. and Mrs. Blank are sore about this, too, and discuss it as they make their chauffeur work to take them on long Sunday rides.

It is not for me to pause here to settle these temporary debates, but now is as good a place as any to insert an observation or two. It seems to me that two characteristics of our early days must be kept. Just as our determination to go wherever youth might be kept us pushing across the world into all areas of activity, so these two characteristics kept us from becoming an aimless busybody. These two characteristics were:

1. A personal interest in each young man.
2. A Christian background and mission.

The early social rooms became the center of warm intimate friendships, and our religious faith kept our ideals high and vigorous. To lose either its intimate friendly contacts in order to become a more popular and convenient service station or its Christian faith in a futile effort to be all things to everybody is to give up in a crucial day what young men need most. They distinguish us from governmental agencies and set apart for us a unique field.

Having said that, let me quickly point out that one good way to lose these two essentials is to attempt to practise the same methods that we used seventy-five years ago. I'd like to illustrate this.

Let's take a young man of fifty years ago. He has come to the city and finds himself attending a Sunday-afternoon religious service in the Y.M.C.A. The dignified gentleman in the second row, who owns a wholesale grocery store, keeps a friendly eye for strangers. He likes the young man. He invites him to his home, his church, and he gives him a job. That's a typical Y.M.C.A. story and a very real one. It happened perhaps a thousand times. I'd like to report that the young man married the old gentleman's daughter, but there is a limit to my imagination. Still, it could be.

Even today such a story might become real, but it belongs more naturally to a romantic yesterday. It is warm, personal, intimate, and it made the early Asso-

ciation. It was the source of much of our financial support.

Today, whether we like it or not, is different. The kindly old gentleman is superseded by the employment secretary, who can't send young men around to the wholesale grocery store for quick employment because it is part of a big and impersonal chain corporation, controlled out of town. Today there is a waiting line outside the secretary's office. Ultimately, the young man will get in, cite his experience, and take an aptitude test. There's no use getting him a job that he can't handle, is there? He may be sent around to a government agency. There is also relief. The old gentleman would not have insulted his young friend, fifty years ago, with any such idea, but today is different. What a chasm between then and now!

Through all this it seems to me that one thing need not change. I refer to a warm personal interest that makes the secretary a friend and keeps him from becoming merely a professional. This friendship will make him alert, clever, tireless. Even if the young man finds no immediate job, he now has a friend helping him. That's why I refer to friendship as dynamic. If our vast institutionalism gets in the way of that, the quicker we lose it, the better.

The same principle applies to our religion. In our time, developments have challenged the social significance of the Christian faith. Social justice is today's theme and to affirm only the need of personal religion is to dodge the issue. Social issues are personal—tremendously so. Individual restraints, faiths, and creeds are imperative but they cannot be preached

in a vacuum and they must have immediate social implications. Thus, to replace the Sunday-afternoon meetings are a whole series of discussion groups around today's struggles. Here again the danger is not the change of form, but the quality of the content. We shall lose our Christian emphasis more quickly by refusing to meet new conditions than by deserting old truths.

Finally, if it is true that our friendship for young men drives us to all fields to meet them where they are, it must also be said that we have never been satisfied with the idea of leaving them just where we found them. Bluntly, we are a character-building effort. We have always had, and still hold, the hope that, out of their contact with the Y.M.C.A., boys and young men will become better persons. That's a definite part of the Big Idea. In effect, we say, "We will provide gymnasiums, dormitories, social rooms. We will organize teams, leagues, classes, and groups. We will run tours and build camps. We will provide reading rooms and publish books; we will entertain, train, teach. We will play, build, debate. But we will keep in mind, while doing all this, that the development of the individual, himself, in body, mind, and spirit is, for us, our paramount purpose."

Let us admit that this has given us, with some people, a "goody-goody" reputation and has, in fact, produced an element of "piousity." Sometimes we are a bit preachy and "holier than thou." I am sorry for all this, but see no alternative. It would be sheer tragedy to hold the broad contact with youth that is

ours and dedicate it to casual ends. It takes genius and infinite pains to weld this vast institution of ours into an agency for personalized good, but it can be done. Otherwise we are merely a movement to hand out materials, destroying rather than creating independence and self-initiative.

The significance of this point is brought out in the debate now going on in reference to government relief. Those who are critical of the current social program lament the loss of personal initiative that may come with security. They say that the fine quality of self-helpfulness is being ruined by government paternalism. On the other hand, assert the defenders, a humane government cannot permit poor housing, hunger, insecurity. The dilemma is acute, and far too serious to become involved in partisan politics. The important question is, "How can help be given to people so as to develop, not destroy, self-helpfulness?" It is fair to say that the Y.M.C.A. has been working at an answer to that for nearly a hundred years. I make no claim that we have the complete answer. I hope it may be found.

To summarize all this, then, let us have a brief outline:

1. The Big Idea of the Y.M.C.A. is to be a friend to youth.
2. To do this we meet young men where they are and work with them in the area of their needs. We change our methods as they change their ways.
3. We are not satisfied to leave them where we

find them. We define our friendship as having mental, physical, and spiritual implications.

But are we actually developing character? Or are we merely a service center? How do the programs of the Y.M.C.A. help boys and young men become better people? What makes character anyway? As they say in the magazines, please turn to the next page.

8

Character in the Making

OFTEN, I think, we take too much for granted in this business of character education, approaching it with superficial methods and having only dim and hazy ideas of what is good for people. "Keeping the boys off the street"; "The Devil finds work for idle hands"; "Our city needs more playgrounds"—here are three expressions that may or may not have significance. As a matter of fact, good boys may grow up on the streets, the Devil can use hands that were never idle, and the value of a playground lies in leadership and program and atmosphere. Now and then

the Y.M.C.A. errs in this direction. I have in my desk an attractive folder describing one of our "Y" camps. In it is an alluring picture of a boy balanced on the end of a springboard, ready to dive into the beautiful lake beneath. In the accompanying text is a suggestion that this boy is having his character rebuilt, and that some day he will be an upstanding Christian citizen. Maybe so, but I am not one to take it for granted. I'll go so far as to admit that, with proper instruction and plenty of practice, he should become a good diver. That's all. Vicious characters may be expert swimmers. Before evaluating the significance of the dive, there are a number of considerations to be given. I do not question the value of camp experience, understand, and I point with pride to our summer camps across the country and to the thousands of boys who went to them last year. For most boys and young men good camps offer creative experience. I am all for them, but I do want to go into this business of character forming with realism and definiteness.

To that end it may be well to define what we mean by "character." My dictionary states that it is "moral excellence." Here is, in my opinion, the single most important question to be asked about the work of the Y.M.C.A. Do its program and activities tend to develop moral excellence? (Incidentally, this test applies as well to a school, church, home, or any other institution working for the making of better people.) At this point one may as well assert bluntly that no one knows as yet a sure method of developing moral excellence in people. If there were a guaranteed scheme for making all of us perfect, the ills of the

world would be over. In fact, it seems somewhat presumptuous for the Y.M.C.A. or any other organization to style itself "character building," with so many things still to be learned. The most that may be claimed is that a good Y.M.C.A. keeps itself informed as to what goes into the making of a good life and gears its activities around the best principles and practices.

With trepidation, I am about to list those tenets that we have worked on through the years. I am giving scant attention to professed purposes and no attention at all to theories as I draw conclusions from our actual activities and programs. Nor do I assert that all of our branches either keep all these principles in mind or that they have become expert in applying them. The following paragraphs, therefore, are not a sales talk but a summary.

Here, then, are the principles that have directed our efforts.

- I. It is necessary to be specific in character building, and futile to be vague. What qualities of character do we seek to implant? What is a "good" person?
- II. Leadership and example are of basic significance.
- III. Because people learn by doing, action and activity constitute the best method of teaching.
- IV. An "all around" approach to character training is essential in the shaping of a balanced life.

Let us consider each of these four.

"BE SPECIFIC"

Few assertions in the English language admit of more diverse interpretations than, "He is a good boy." In a home, for instance, parents often accept docility for goodness and conformity for character. When you and I say, "My son has never given me a moment's worry," we may not be paying a tribute to our son, but casting doubt on ourselves. When Mr. and Mrs. Brown brought Harold down to the Midville "Y" they told Joe Williams, "Harold is a good boy." Fortunately, Joe was not unduly stumped by this questionable introduction, but as yet it must be recorded that he has found few things for which Harold is any good. It's silly to limit moral excellence to a state of innocuous passivity, as many of us do. I am against profanity even of the habitual, absent-minded variety, but I would not assert that a boy expresses himself well simply because he is trained not to say "Damn." Character is more than a set of the most worthy negations. We need to determine specifically the positive character qualities we seek to implant. Moreover, these qualities must be dynamic, motivating, actually determining our conduct.

As a result of this conviction, Joe Williams will not mechanically insert Harold Brown into any old program. Rather, he will have in mind the kind of boy and young man Harold should become. It is exceedingly difficult to define in a paragraph or two the essentials of a good person, but I am tempted to try it, as an escape from the vagueness of so many character discussions.

First of all, then, Harold must become increasingly intelligent, and by this I mean able to handle himself in whatever situation may arise. He must learn how to size up a situation, think clearly about it, and reason out his own actions. Many people call this "common sense." Of course, here and there, you may run across a good person who may be unintelligent, but such goodness is accidental and not often permanent. Let us say quickly that intelligence is the first step toward a good life. Secondly, you will add the quality of self-helpfulness. Harold will always be a hitch-hiker through life unless he gets that, and not too good a hitch-hiker either. You and I, in judging our own children, often apply this principle in reverse. Actually, we are afraid to do many things that are needed to insure our offspring enough self-initiative. We help them with their homework, pick up after them, think it's our business to get them to school on time, and often unblushingly attempt to select all their friends. As a matter of fact, it would have been better if Mr. and Mrs. Brown had not come down to the "Y" with Harold, thus cheating him of a chance to make his own beginning. We are belaboring the government right now about killing the initiative of young people, but it was a favorite indoor sport centuries before the New Deal was launched. At any rate, there is no hope for Harold unless he becomes a self-starter.

Thirdly, there is the imperative need for conscientiousness. Intelligent people and self-helpful people may often be the most dangerous people. Cold intelligence and dominant self-helpfulness are

two of the characteristics that make the world a shambles today. There must be added a sense of right and wrong, and an allegiance to right. I am not asserting that in this curious world each of us knows the right thing to do. I simply say that all the Harold Browns will be constantly faced with choices to make as long as they live. Somehow, we must train them to make the highest possible choice. This is the most difficult of all problems.

The final character quality, I am calling "social sensitivity." It may be involved in a conscientious attitude, but should, I think, be listed by itself. It is simply a conviction that no one lives for himself, that personal liberty is a relative term, that, realistically, there is no such oddity as one unrelated person. This will be for Harold the most useful guiding principle he will ever find.

Well, there you have one person's conception of goodness and a good person, intelligent, self-helpful, conscientious, socially sensitive. Whether this list impresses you or not, let us agree completely that we make character only as we do it specifically. I am happy to report that the Y.M.C.A. is becoming increasingly impatient with character generalities and says with wholesome pertinence, "Name three."

LEADERSHIP AND EXAMPLE

The oldest tried and tested means of character education is to have someone around who possesses the qualities you seek to implant. The Y.M.C.A. contributed nothing to the establishment of this truth,

but it makes a conscientious effort to apply it. If it be true that we have steadily widened the range of membership, it is also true that, so far as leadership is concerned, we have pursued the best. I am not referring to a copy-cat method of blind hero worship when I assert the significance of example, nor are all our leaders to be considered models. But the "Y" constantly seeks to lift the level of those who direct its policies and conduct its program. Now and then we elect a board member because he is a "name," has money, or is a strategic choice. But the practice is not a good one. And I know that we consider the major problem of a good group to be the selection of a good leader. The first question to be asked of a prospective leader is, "What kind of man is he?"

Go back now to young Harold Brown. Joe Williams will interest him in some kind of group—in gymnasium, manual training shop, hiking, swimming. This group will have a young leader, expert in the specialty and good at handling people. Because comparatively few boys make up the activity, the leader will be in the forefront. Let us say that Harold decides to make an airplane, which obviously calls for precision as to detail and determination to keep at it until it is finished. Harold, who may have started a number of things at home that he never completed, may easily lose his early enthusiasm. On one side of him may be a boy who is so clever that Harold becomes discouraged. On the other side may be one who is careless. If this experience is to teach Harold thoroughness and persistency, the whole thing calls for a leader who actually lives those qualities, giving

expression to them before the boys. So much is, of course, apparent, but is by no means a statement of all the involvements. Suppose the leader plays favorites with the boys, has a bad temper, uses careless language, lies sometimes, does not get on with his associates, is extravagant with material, expresses a casual lack of interest in church or education. Suppose that the boys pick up the impression that he gambles and is not too particular about girls. Here is the situation. In the realm of handicraft Harold becomes an admirer of his leader and may acquire character advantages that the program provides, but this very fact makes him too easily influenced by other attitudes that the same leader possesses. The total effect may be bad. And this principle holds from the humblest leader of the smallest group up to the board of directors who speak for the "Y" in the community. I have gone into detail here because this is a tremendously important question involving all social agencies. The freer an agency is to select its leadership, the more effective it may be in developing character. The private agency, well conducted, has an unusual opportunity to obtain selected leadership. Physically, for instance, a boy is probably safer in a public playground or at home than on the street. Morally, one cannot speak with such assurance. It depends on the quality of leadership involved—and I refer to more than technical abilities. If, however, the Y.M.C.A. eases off in its leadership qualifications, lay or professional, it loses justification for support, and lends weight to the "let the government do it" argument.

ACTION AND ACTIVITY

It seems hardly necessary to state the truism that we learn by doing things. However, as ponderously as we recite this rule, just so reluctant are we to apply it fully. How often do we use this expression to our children, "How many times have I told you not to do that?" The fact is that we adults are almost completely frustrated when we become aware that young people cannot be talked into being good. Advice is, of course, the cheapest, quickest, most precise way to rear a young generation. It has one weakness: it doesn't work. I do not underestimate the effectiveness of advice well given, but I do consider it purely supplementary to other methods. Joe Williams can talk himself dumb advising Harold Brown how to behave in the locker room and gymnasium, but he leaves most of the lessons to the experience that is about to become Harold's when he joins the group. This may be more painful for Harold, but it is far more effective.

More than almost any other organization the Y.M.C.A. lends itself to a wide range of possibilities in action programs. It is difficult to sit still around the Midville Association. Even the two old gentlemen who come in to play checkers have to move now and then. It's not a place for musing. We are not noted for producing many great thinkers, and, if we do think, it is generally in motion. But in our groups, physical or mental, are literally thousands of exercises in co-ordination, temperance, control, balance, debate, social adaptability, moral acumen, service to one's

fellows, co-operative effort. In the gym a young chap bends over to keep his figure and in the Phalanx Club he discusses his duty as a citizen. In the Emblem Club he considers ways to get new members, and in the Hi-Y he asks about God. There is shop craft here to teach skills and a Bible class to inquire about the Christian way. Participation is the test of good membership. Joe Williams takes time to read a book, now and then, but generally he is doing something somewhere.

There is, I must warn, a subtle danger in all activity programs: namely, that we shall arrive at a point where we consider it a virtue to keep busy. There is a tendency toward this in the Y.M.C.A. where we file necessary records and sometimes judge ourselves too much by them. Furthermore, many groups produce income, and naturally there is a budget to be balanced. Even so, the action method is sound. When the Midville Y.M.C.A. achieves the goal where it can pack into its activities all those elements that build the "moral element" and when it eliminates all things that mar body, mind, or spirit, it will be indispensable in any plan of Christian character development.

THE ALL-AROUND APPROACH

In the large, society has devised four approaches to a good life. In the limits of these pages there can be no more than casual mention of them, but they should be stated.

The first is Religion and the Church. It is held essential for us to worship God, and the Christian

seeks to make his own life after the manner of Christ. Prayer becomes a search for one's guidance and devotion brings clean hands and a pure heart. In every community is a place set aside for these purposes, where, humbly, men acknowledge that life itself is spiritual.

Nearly as universal as Religion is Education, which builds for every boy and girl a classroom and imparts to each the information of human experience. It struggles to teach a child that two and two are four, and the child's parents something of the laws of nature, economics, philosophy.

There is also the home, where by intimate contact, one learns of the affections, adjustments, inter-relationships of human beings.

And, more recently, there is emphasis on recreation and leisure-time activities as essential to balanced living and creative of personal attitudes and attributes.

Let a break-down come in personal or social morale, and we are quick indeed to criticize sharply one or all of these four. "The Church is losing its hold on people"; "How wild these young high school people are"; "Homes are not what they used to be—in fact no one stays there"; "We must have playgrounds to break up the gangs." Surely you have heard these expressions again and again. Quite possibly, you have used them yourself. They illustrate how sensitive we all are to any let-up in efforts to help youth.

Curiously enough, and unfortunate beyond estimate, is the idea that each of these is separate from any of the others. Life, itself, is one. Much harm comes to a society that departmentalizes itself. In

my judgment the most important development in the entire drive to the good life is the breaking down of barriers and artificial demarcations in an effort to make a unified approach toward moral excellence. The Church is not a thing set entirely apart. Religion is significant only when one lives it. Education is not merely accumulated information and high marks. It includes learning what people are going to do. The sentiment of home and family ties is not sufficient to make good people. And recreation without ideals is waste. Thus we find more action groups in the church, more guidance and informality in the school; and we sense the need for the best of Religion and Education in both the home and the recreational life of the community. We are scrambling everything up, and, for one, I think it's swell!

The Y.M.C.A. (and please do not consider this boasting) has worked at this pattern throughout most of its life. What are the elements that have shaped our effort?

1. The Christian Faith. The word is not only in our name, but it actually called us into being. It is our tradition, our background. No less than ever we assert now our faith in the saving power of the Christian Gospel. We have, to be sure, changed, as the Church itself has changed, our methods and our emphases within that faith, but we are distinctly one of the Christian agencies.
2. Education. We seek to keep informed of the best in educational method and aims. We are,

at our best, a teaching institution. We work closely with schools and colleges and run our own groups with the guidance of educational experts.

3. Intimacy. We have tried to be as personal and as intimate as the home. We have assumed that, first, we must be a friend.
4. Recreation. Our most obvious contribution.

In short, within the scope of our activities, our pattern is a blend of the four essentials. To the extent that we eliminate any one, to that extent does our program suffer. Without religion we give up our emphasis on the spiritual; without education we become fumbling and stupid; without intimate friendliness we are cold, impersonal; without our emphasis on play, recreation and sports, we lose contact with young life. If the Y.M.C.A. in Midville is wise, it will check itself along these lines.

I have tried in this chapter to justify the assertion that the Y.M.C.A. vitally affects the lives of young people, but I hope you will not think that I make blanket claims for all we do. The blending of these formative elements is not easy, and often our efforts are not thorough. Too much departmentalism still handicaps our work. Not always does the weight lifter become anything more, and you can bowl at the "Y" and not do anything else there. The stamp collector may know nothing of the Hi-Y Club and the chap in the dorm may use us only as a bedroom. I am not sure I would change those things if I could,

but I would consider them only a start. And I would want to be sure that out of a year's program come young men better prepared to live, with more regard for moral excellence.

9

Secretaries

UP TO this point we have given attention chiefly to the ideas, ideals, participants, and activities as they associate themselves with the organization of the Y.M.C.A. I hope now you will be interested in looking over the folks who make the organization work. In our first hundred years, the professional secretary has emerged. His is, by now, a vocation. This means that, as a boy or young man, he decides to go into Y.M.C.A. work; that in many instances he goes to a college for training secretaries, such as Springfield College in Massachusetts or George Wil-

liams in Chicago; that he attends summer courses for further education; that he becomes officially certified; that his record is on file in State and National Personnel Bureaus; and that he participates in the Association's insurance and retirement systems. Novelists and columnists attach peculiar qualifications and characteristics to him as they do to undertakers, clergymen, insurance agents, and bankers. This is always conclusive evidence that the profession is established and the type fixed. To these observers he is a glad-some mixer, slightly pious and preachy, naturally or artificially effervescent, just as the banker is shrewd and cold and the undertaker is somber and watchful. I state all this without prejudice to one view or the other. One does not debate about a cartoon and possibly there is a modicum of truth in the picture. Anyway, there is the profession.

In addition to bringing forth a new vocational classification, we have developed extensive plans for lay activity and leadership, taking great pride in calling ourself a lay organization. This emphasis on lay leadership was based, in the early days, upon a distinction between the business man and the clergy. In this sense we are still strictly lay. However, now that we have our own technical leaders, who of necessity are better acquainted with our involved operations, we should be a bit more careful about terminology and should do fresh thinking as to the relative place of professional and amateur leaders. Nevertheless, the countless committees, boards, and councils that come to life in the operation of the "Y" are truly a striking example of volunteer service.

This chapter deals, however, with the general secretary and his staff. They may not be so important as our radio friend Andy thinks he is but neither are they so humble and self-effacing as Amos. They are (and I take great risk in saying it) a combination of the two. By way of being specific I'd like you to meet Alfred M. Thompson, general secretary of the Midville "Y." At the Rotary Club, which he attends faithfully, they call him "Al." He is fifty-four and thus, in the jargon of the Movement, has "six years to go." He will not have to retire at sixty, but he will be eligible to and, as one secretary puts it, "If he doesn't he should feel like the fellow who has passed a red light."

Al's father was a Methodist minister in Ohio, a circumstance which contributed two factors to his son's career. He has a strong religious background, which carries over into his own personality and has influenced his Association work. It also trained him to live comfortably and somewhat contentedly on a modest income. General secretary Thompson gets a salary of forty-two hundred dollars. During the worst depression years he took cuts but is now on the way back, he hopes. At sixty, as I said, he may retire with an income of about half his salary. I'd be willing to tell you the exact amount, but, as a matter of fact, I am not able even to figure out my own. This is no reflection on the Retirement Fund, which is efficiently run under all the various restraints and laws which it ought to run under.

This forty-two hundred dollars sounds like a pretty big salary to some, and causes now and then minor

objections. But Al has to have a car, belongs to two clubs, contributes to a number of philanthropies, and is still paying tuition for his youngest daughter. If it were not for his retirement provision, he'd be as poor as his father was when he died. (I insert this security stuff of his so that you won't worry about it.) Al's only hazard is that he will get in difficulties with his board and lose his job. This happens not as a rule, but too often. At fifty-four, he might not be able to find another place. He would, after two years or so, have to withdraw from the Retirement Plan, taking out only his own deposits with interest. During these last few years a number of Al's friends have been turned loose. I am not criticizing anyone—or am I? In any case it is heart-breaking business. I sit at a desk where they come looking for a new job, and I know.

But back to Al. He helped work himself through college and to a B.A. degree, which then was enough to get him a job. A Bachelor of Arts degree in those days was as important as a Doctor of Philosophy now and about as rare. His first Y.M.C.A. work was as Boys' Work secretary in a small city, under an old-fashioned secretary who, in this more complex era, would have difficulty filling out the necessary reports of a modern Association. Old Ephraim Whittlesey was very serious, very religious. He knew little about making a building attractive and he never read a book on staff training. If the "Y" funds were a little low, old Ephraim would don his derby, call on a few folks down the street, tell them about the boys at the "Y," and come back with the cash. He died before the

Community Chest was born. This is, perhaps, fortunate because he would have been a hard man to control. He had no system for anything but an uncanny way of spotting a boy who needed help. In fact, he was an artist along two lines. He could straighten out puzzled young men and he could get money for his work, characteristic of his time and generation. The whole thing now is much more scientific and, I hope, as effective. I am never certain as to whether newer methods are as much better as more technical terminologies make them sound.

Al thinks often of this flash-back of another day and wonders if he, himself, couldn't keep closer to the young man in the lobby.

You may be interested in looking over Al's record as it is filed in the Personnel Bureau.

Born 1886.	Education, college. Married, four children. Presbyterian
1907-9	Boys' Work Secretary, Hinesville, Massachusetts
1909-11	Assistant General Secretary, Coopersville, Maine
1911-17	General Secretary, Molesburg, Indiana
1917-25	General Secretary, Jamesburg, Illinois
1925-	General Secretary, Midville, New York

You can figure for yourself that he was thirty-nine when he came to Midville. He liked it, fitted in, has had no desire to move. When you read this kind of service record you can be sure of a few things. The man may not be a genius but he knows and likes his work, is valuable in the community, has enough executive ability to get by, and has found for himself a useful, happy career. He had his last chance to move about five years ago. He might have accepted it, but he was happy where he was, the work was progressing,

he had a home in Midville nearly paid for, so he stayed on. Strictly off the record, his wife didn't care much about moving either. And that is Mr. Alfred Thompson. His big project now is to get some work going for the colored folks. During the election campaign he arranged a forum for three candidates, Republican, Democrat, and Socialist. Mr. Dewolf Skinner read the notice of it and stormed at Al. Mr. Skinner was glad to give ear to the Republican, graciously tolerant of the Democrats, and infuriated at the idea of a Socialist in the "Y." Al said, "If we have one, we have them all." I like that.

Joe Williams is the Boys' Work secretary. He could have been a general secretary a few years back but he didn't want to become one. He knows and likes boys and he ferrets out club leaders with the zest of the most fervent hunter. At thirty-six he wonders if he should make a change, reminding himself that Al will retire in a few years and the new executive might not give him the freedom he now enjoys. Besides, most of the secretaries who started with him have moved up. These are, fortunately, only temporary misgivings. In his heart he knows that he would rather handle a boys' group than a board, and a boy's problem is more along his line than a budget. He has a conviction that the Boys' Work secretary should know a little more about boys than anyone else in the community, being prepared to advise with school men and ministers about youth problems. He is disturbed when he hears of a Y.M.C.A. hiring a man just because he can be got cheaply. He does not know how many hours he works, and he has been forced to develop

many defenses against his wife's plaintive assertion that he should spend more time at home. It does disturb him to realize that he may not be seeing enough of his own son. Joe reads some of the best and most recent books on boys and groups and youth problems, but probably not enough. He goes to many of the conferences where common problems are considered; and one of the times when he spoke his mind was when the Association, in a moment of economy, refused for a year to send its secretaries to these conferences. By way of change he teaches a Sunday-school class, speaks to a church group about three Sundays a month and is on four or five community committees. In the summer he runs the Boys' Camp. He knows some boys who flunked out of school and others who are honor students, some who went to college, and others who went to penitentiaries. He handles rich boys with skill and treats poor boys as though they were rich. I should like to claim that he is perfect, but I must be real about his faults too. Mrs. Doodle thinks he should dress more neatly and Mr. Woolf does not consider him much of a disciplinarian. He is a poor business man, and his enthusiasm for boys gets him into minor difficulties with his church, which he thinks is centered too much about adults. He considers the local parole officer too officious, and he thinks racial and sectarian lines are drawn too tightly. Another reason that Mr. and Mrs. Doodle do not like him is that, when they visited the camp, he kept right on playing ball with the boys instead of entertaining the guests. "Can you imagine that?" exclaimed Mrs. Doodle. Mr. Thompson, the general secretary, up-

braided Joe for such carelessness. Joe, however, suspected that Mr. Thompson's face was trying to hide a grin.

We have time for one story to illustrate Joe's greatest weakness. It happened on Wednesday night during school holidays. (Joe takes Wednesday nights off, but because of the school holiday rush at the building he decided he'd better drop in.) Just as he was entering the boys' department his young assistant was belaboring Ted Dooley for riotous behavior. Ted was in process of being banished for the night. Joe watched him depart and caught up with him on the sidewalk.

Joe said, "What are you going to do now?"

Ted replied, "Gee, Joe, I don't know. My folks are at a party and my sister has a date too."

Joe said, "I'm looking for some one to go to the movies with."

I know a number of educational principles that are violated by this action on Joe's part, but, luckily, Ted Dooley is ignorant of them all. Joe is informed about the technical stuff too, but he knows Ted better, and what are a few principles when "a feller needs a friend"?

I hope that by this time you have gathered that just about the most important thing the Midville Y.M.C.A. does is to keep Joe Williams in Midville.

John Peters is Assistant Boys' Work secretary. He graduated a year ago from Springfield College, where his record was good, if not brilliant. (Every year State and Area secretaries go to Springfield and other

colleges to interview seniors who desire to become secretaries. This enables them to furnish information to local Associations, and that is how John secured his job.) He gets fourteen hundred a year and owes two hundred and ninety dollars on his education. He has been given an all-around college training, with special emphasis on social service; and he had a year of practical group leadership work in a Y.M.C.A. near the College. He is a clean-cut young chap, a little too impatient, and a trifle liberal. He handles four or five groups and supervises the activities in the building. His work is watched closely by Joe, and generally by the State Boys' Work secretary. He may become, in due time, the Boys' Work secretary in another association, a General Program secretary or, if he has executive leaning, a general secretary somewhere. If he merits it, he is fairly certain of promotion and, in any event, he is part of an efficient personnel system that keeps an alert eye for comers. He is not half so interested in this, at the present time, as he is in Miss Lucinda Somers, whose father is the lawyer on the "Y" board and whose mother is always calling out messages to her departing husband. Remember? Lucinda will probably be that way, too, but John does not know it yet.

It has been said facetiously and perhaps undeservedly that you can identify the general secretary as the fellow who walks around the "Y" as though he owned the place and the physical director as the man who walks about as though he didn't care a darn who owns it. This does injustice to Art Scott, physical

director at Midville. He is an assertive, cordial chap trained for his position and enjoying it tremendously. Some Associations make the mistake of underestimating the qualifications of this position, but a number of factors make it essential to have the best man securable.

Actually the physical department is the most attractive element in the Y.M.C.A., meaning that it draws more members than any other feature. Its program includes a widening range of activities and needs constant revision. At its best it is the most personal of all departments and needs to be. It may be all right for a member to play pool when he should be doing something else, but results are immediately disastrous for a man on the gym floor who should not be there. Examination and specialized health facilities take on increasing significance. Furthermore, there are more opportunities to develop leadership training and group activity than in any other part of our work. If it is true that the outsider looks on the "Y" as a somewhat enlightened gymnasium, it is also true that Y.M.C.A. management may overlook the real significance of our physical program. I think the range between poor leadership and good leadership is greater in the physical department than in any other, and if I were a member of a board I would insist on excellence in the physical director. For the same reason I would give him and his committees high place in formulating policies, and determining general programs. I'd like to list qualifications for this position, but I am speaking, understand, as an amateur and not as a qualified critic:

1. He should be personable and appealing.
2. He should know all the technical angles of individual and group health and recreation.
3. He should be a careful administrator, for he has many details to handle.
4. He should be an organizer with ability to select and train leaders and assistants.
5. He will need to be a student who keeps up with health trends.
6. He should know the total Y.M.C.A. program and how to integrate his own department with the others.

Art Scott does not possess all of these qualifications. After he graduated from Springfield, he took his early training under a physical director who had not kept abreast of the times and who did too much work himself and not enough organizing. Art is overcoming this gradually. He co-operates with the others on the staff, is well liked by the members, keeps a sharp and friendly eye on individuals, and is always aggressive for more equipment. Right now he is having a recurring debate with Joe Williams which I record in detail because it goes on in many places. It is illustrative, also, of the mass of detailed planning involved in running a Y.M.C.A. which is rarely observed by the casual member.

Bright minds in boy psychology have brought forth the idea that boys live in groups or gangs and that, therefore, we should keep these groups together in all departments and activities. The Gra-Y Club, for instance, is a group from the grade schools which Joe

Williams organized. Joe thinks that, inasmuch as this group has supper together and elects officers and conducts social and discussional programs, it would be the proper thing for them to play in the gym together. Why break up the gang?

Art Scott is skeptical. If there were only one group, the issue might not be acute. Since there are many, Art's carefully designed schedule is shot to pieces. Furthermore, the leader of the Gra-Y is a dud on the gym floor and Art's assistant has groups and classes of his own. Furthermore, it might be a good thing to break up the gangs—the schools do, don't they? In schools, they don't organize a chemistry class merely for the purpose of keeping a gang together. They want to teach the boys chemistry. Art feels that the gym is set up to teach physical education. They argue this out in staff meeting, which is held every Monday morning, and always arrive at a compromise, which is perhaps the right answer anyway.

Art faces a vocational problem in his career. In the average Y.M.C.A. it is essential for the physical director to do some floor work. This means pretty hard going in the few years previous to retirement. Unless he is promoted to a large city where the physical directorship is supervisional, or to a general secretaryship, which takes him out of the profession, the situation often becomes acute. Obviously, there are only a few possibilities in the larger places. Art is, I confess, not the worrying kind and right now with his son on the Springfield football team, wonders why his Alma Mater, famed for its leadership in physical training, is not winning more games. He still plays hand-

ball in his leisure moments, is pained at the general secretary's increasing circumference, and is an incurable fanatic on the subject of fresh air.

Lester Dume was until a month ago the Assistant Physical Director. He was a capable young chap but lacked one qualification. He could handle routine affairs well enough but he worked chiefly with boys, and the plain fact is that he didn't appeal to them. He might do a good job in a school where his classes would be handed to him, but in the "Y" it takes something else. The board should have had a man in his place immediately, but figures on saving a month's item on the budget. This is expensive and ill-advised economy.

Herb Dean is the Membership Secretary and also has charge of the dormitories, and runs a few groups in the young men's division. If he doesn't keep the membership up, he is on the spot and if the dormitory occupancy is down, executive eyebrows are lifted in his direction. He runs the Annual Membership Campaign, where a hundred solicitors take seven hundred cards and report at three luncheons after the opening dinner. Herb gets on with everyone, is always hustling everywhere, could make much more money in business, and wants an Association of his own as soon as possible. He will get this by speaking to a State Secretary, who will have his personnel record brought up to date and will keep him in mind. The National Personnel Secretary will also be notified. When there is a vacancy, Herb, along with three or four

others, will be interviewed by a committee of laymen. If they make him their choice, he will go, and if they don't he'll run another successful membership drive for Midville. Mr. Mike McTigue, the contractor, knows Herb because his young men stay in the dormitory and every now and then Herb asks him to give some young fellow a job. One time Mike said to Herb, "You could make a lot more money out of the 'Y.'" To which Herb answered, "But I wouldn't have half as much fun." This is a brief and realistic way of saying that Herb believes in what he is doing and likes to do it. Herb married a local girl, who is going to put up a frenzied kick if she has to move away from Midville.

Harris A. Elmquist is the Business Secretary. He keeps books and watches the budget. He does the buying and can't understand where the pencils go to and why some secretaries are so careless. The girl employees are under his charge, as are all other members of the non-professional group. The rest of the staff call him Harris Accurate Elmquist. He is a good fellow, and much more cordial than he dares to appear. (The business secretaries have their own National Association and publish their own bulletin, probably the best of its kind anywhere.) I'd like to tell you more about him, but being at heart a program man, I am afraid of all the Elmquists.

Two young men are employed at the desk. One is a local boy who lacks certification qualifications and who, I fear, has no future in the "Y." He can handle

the work all right but is marking time and the Y.M.C.A. does him an injustice in employing him in a dead-end job. The other is a college graduate who couldn't find anything else to do. He is a genial, capable young man, and has opportunities to advance.

And there is the staff of the Midville "Y," with their problems, peculiarities and responsibilities. I refrain from referring to them as typical because there are too many variations. Some "Y's" employ one secretary and some employ hundreds. It is only my opinion, but I am inclined to think that our greatest organizational achievement in recent years is the development of a system to select good men, place them intelligently, offer opportunities to study in conferences and Summer Schools, handle transfers and promotions, and provide a degree of security through insurance and retirement systems. It is true that the Y.M.C.A. is not organized for secretaries; but it is also true that its success is measured by secretarial efficiency.

I'd like to close this chapter with a bow to the retired secretary. He has enough income to live on and he is still in the Insurance Alliance. He is amazingly tolerant of new ways even when he stays on to live in the city where once he worked. He does what he is requested to do and only rarely makes himself a nuisance. Trained to good organizational method, he sticks to it. In the winter he goes to Florida to bowl on the green and escape the cold. They have their own National paper and hold district meetings. When

he dies, each member of the Alliance will contribute to a fund for his family, which will total about five thousand dollars. He, himself, has been contributing for years to other families. And to all secretaries will go a kindly statement of who he was and what he did.

10

Laymen and the Board

LET us look over the 1,316,573 members or laymen in the Y.M.C.A. Let us not be too legalistic about terminology because, to be frank, Y.M.C.A. membership means many different things to different people. All that to one side, a fairly general practice is that just about anyone may become a member who wants to pay a modest fee. Some Associations have a statement of purpose, or require church membership as a condition to voting membership, but this is a story of people and not of regulations. The practice is to take in anyone who is interested enough

to want to come. In Midville if Henry Stubbs walks into the Y.M.C.A. and expresses a desire to join, he will be taken to the membership secretary, who will ask about his name, age, church affiliation, and what he wants to do in the "Y." If the gym is his interest (and most often it is) the membership secretary will introduce him around and the details are over.

Starting here, then, the so-called laymen begin to accumulate for one reason or another. A joins because his friend belongs and likes it. B joins because he needs exercise. C joins the "business men's group" because it provides club privileges at small cost, including masseur, health equipment, sun lamps. D wants to bowl. E desires a room in the dormitory. F wants to join a special program group. G signs up in the public speaking class. H was enlisted in an enthusiastic membership campaign and has nothing definite in mind. J joins because he is sympathetic to our general purposes and wants to help us. K is a stranger in town and wants to get acquainted. So it goes. Generally speaking, there are three sources of membership:

1. Those who desire to use our physical facilities.
2. Those who desire to join some social or educational group.
3. Those who are in sympathy with our purposes.

It is fair to say that, when they join, the vast majority come for a specific thing and are not to any great extent interested in the total project. All this, I think, is to the good, because it fits into the purpose of the "Y" as defined—to be a friend of young men.

Were we to become too selective, the very thing for which we strive would be lost. The test of our utility is not the initial condition of membership but rather what happens to young men after they join.

Observe now how the "Y" works. This building into which the young man comes in order to wrestle, play handball, or study is literally alive with other activities. Most of these activities are directed by committees. If the young man shows signs of interest in his group activity, he finds himself on a committee. Out of the process, from the vast number of joiners come those who gradually take on directive activities. It may start in a very small way but in the "Y," as in the country itself, anyone may become President! Of course we are not quite as perfect as that and not all our presidents work up through the ranks. Personally, I wish they might. In 1939 about 190,000 served on boards, committees, or councils of one kind or another. Here they learned to plan, co-ordinate, co-operate. Here they were trained to give and take and to assume responsibility.

From this 190,000 will come selected leaders for the more responsible places of leadership. This process, as described, is somewhat idealistic and I make no claim that the system is perfect. Often we are not alert enough to leadership material, and too often, instead of producing our own leaders, we use the grab method of building a board by selecting prominent persons in the community whose wealth or standing may help us. Some of this is advisable; too much of it dangerous. Although it is true that voting members elect the board of directors, elections

are not taken very seriously and we have not yet reached the finer practices of democracy. I don't think "the powers that be" are to blame for this, since in most cases the average "Y" member does not care who is on the board.

I have witnessed only one minor rebellion in my sixteen years of experience. I cite it to illustrate the principle involved. It was the custom of this particular Association to hold its annual election at a membership dinner. Legal notices had gone out and a nominating committee had arranged for a ballot to be passed around. Although the ballot allowed some choice, some of the younger men, active participants in the program, felt that the choice was not broad enough. One of the young members received recognition from the nervous president and nominated one of his group. He insisted that the list of nominees as prepared by the committee was not representative of the active membership. The president was greatly disturbed and questioned the wisdom of throwing such a monkey wrench into the well-oiled machinery. There was a vote and the young man lost. The president was relieved, but I was sorry. Here were, I felt, signs of wholesome interest and vigorous membership; also signs of too much centralized control.

Sometimes the "Y," like many other organizations, errs not only in failing to spread control, but also is not expert in distributing responsibility. I ran into an illustration of this not long ago, during a financial campaign. As I walked into the building I was impressed with activity everywhere. The lounge was

filled with young men reading the newspapers, listening to the radio, playing pool. Yet when I entered the small gym where tables were set (we always eat our way into campaigns) for the opening banquet, I was astonished at the small number of workers. The chairman of the drive apologized, saying that there had been great difficulties in securing solicitors. Maybe I am wrong, but it seems to me that a challenge to the young men in the lounge might have produced results. In view of the fact that membership dues are not sufficient to balance our budget, somewhere in the process more of the members should be faced with responsibility, not only for the help they might give, but for their own training.

I must not give the impression that these are common occurrences. We do enlist for special service one out of about every seven, and we are bettering our efforts.

Admitting that we need improvement in membership participation and leadership, I make no effort to appear modest as we consider another phase of lay activity. I refer to the enthusiastic devotion and actual sacrifice that a smaller group of laymen evidence for the Y.M.C.A. Names come quickly to mind as I look back over my sixteen years. Laymen who are always at meetings, laymen who always serve when asked, laymen who hold it a high privilege to serve through the Y.M.C.A. I have known many to ignore their business responsibility time after time to meet Association emergencies. I know one who never missed a board meeting for thirty-some years except for one time when there was a funeral in the family;

another who for fifty years took an active and forward-looking part in his "Y"; another who always carries a list of organizations in his pocket for which he asks subscriptions. In our smaller cities I have seen the Y.M.C.A. actually kept alive by the devotion of five or six men, and I have sat in at the funeral of Y.M.C.A.'s where there were no deeply interested laymen to keep them alive. I recall a layman now, a mild figure of a man but a giant in the industrial life of America, who used to walk around one of our camps actually begging for a chance to put a building here or make improvements there. Once I gave a talk at a camp chapel where he was present, using as a text, "There is a boy here," from the story of feeding the five thousand. He used to tell me that it became a theme for his greatest interest. Long before he knew me he had begun to live as though "There is a boy here," a boy who might now need help, but who, trained now, would be the leader tomorrow. One is tempted to linger indefinitely in reviewing these great laymen and their achievements, but, without offense, in the interest of realism we had better look over the Midville board. I'll describe them and rate them; but, remember, I may be prejudiced.

President—Raymond Smith. Mr. Smith owns a small factory and is a director of the Midville Trust Company. He is interested in almost every good work, and sits on a number of philanthropic boards. He did not want to be president of the "Y," but was willing to take his turn. He has been on the board six years and in that time has become familiar with the management problem. Not until he became

president did he really learn much of the program, but in the last year he has dropped around often. He goes to all the Industrial Club meetings, and wonders why he didn't start sooner. He attended the induction ceremony of the Hi-Y Club and was deeply impressed. With increasing interest he inquires how successful Herb, the dormitory secretary, is in finding jobs for young men. Known chiefly as an efficient business executive, he created a mild uprising in a recent meeting of the board when he bawled out the other members for not knowing more about the program. With due appreciation for Mr. Smith, I humbly suggest three areas of improvement. He should learn more about the Y.M.C.A. as a national and world-wide venture. He should not spread his leadership in the community quite so thinly. It would be better, I think, if he were to select two majors. Finally, he is a bit too inclined to think Prof. Cartwright's ideas are impractical and often too liberal. If you feel I am impertinent to make suggestions to one of the leading citizens of Midville, let me inform you that the Mr. Smiths get going at me fairly often.

Vice-president Professor H. R. Cartwright is a genial soul who could be president but prefers not to be. He is the Dean of a small college, drawn to the "Y" through its interest in young men. Midville does not have the rotating system of board membership and Professor Cartwright, in his seven years of service, has come to know the program thoroughly and to be its most valued advisor. He is chairman of the Personnel Committee, which leaves the final

choice of staff men pretty much to the general secretary, but is free with suggestions. He is a good man on the board although sometimes a trifle impatient. Whispered suggestions to you, Professor. Don't give up on the educational values of the physical department so easily; and, really, President Smith is not so conservative as you think he is.

Secretary of the board Henry Tillson is one who came up through the ranks, having joined the "Y" twelve years ago to keep thin. Then he was a bank clerk, but he has been promoted steadily. He served on the Handball Committee, later was chairman of the Physical Committee, a position he still holds. He is a stalwart defender of the rights and privileges of his department and, although he has broadened his view, holds strongly that the board would know more about the "Y" and would be more agreeable to work with if, as a body, all its members were forced to attend gym classes. He is always the head of a division in the Annual Finance Campaign, and goes after the hardest prospects himself. He thinks the "Y" is playing with dynamite in some of its forums, and just recently he looked up Joe Williams and said, "Hey, Joe, my son told me the other day that he has been getting sex instruction down here. Isn't he a little young for that?" Joe said dryly, "Maybe, but judging by his comments he has not exactly been blind to such matters." Mr. Tillson said with surprise, "I'm a son of a gun!" That evening he told his wife and was promptly informed that she not only knew that Wilfred was in the group, but had actually suggested it. Mr. Tillson thought,

"I guess I'm the old fogey in this family." Comment to Mr. Tillson: Drop in the boys' department more often; and how about heading up a drive for World Service?

Treasurer is Abner Whitcomb. For twenty-one years he has made a personal hobby of the Y.M.C.A. He is a successful insurance man and chairman of the House Committee, which means that he looks after the welfare of the building. He serves also on the Finance Committee. You can reach him whenever he is needed, and he is well known to the membership. In a board meeting Mr. Flintface said to him, "You will wreck our budget for the sake of making our dormitories comfortable." To which Mr. Whitcomb replied, "Gladly, and thanks for the compliment." But he is a good treasurer, insists that good business methods call for him being bonded; and if necessary, borrows money from the bank rather than permit current creditors to suffer. He is the only member who attends State and National meetings with regularity, and, as a result, is the best informed member on the board. Appraisal of Mr. Whitcomb—more power to you, Sir!

I mention the rest of the board briefly.

Roscoe Moore. He never attends board meetings, but once in a while comes out to the Annual Dinner. He is perhaps the leading name in Midville and contributes liberally. A kindly, courteous gentleman, who trusts the people who run the "Y" and gladly gives the prestige of his name. Remark to Mr. Moore. Thanks, and you should come up and see us sometime.

Theodore Milder is a follow-the-leader-man who seems to be afraid of opposing certain people on the board. Sometimes these members have many other inter-related affairs, business, social or economic, in the community, which makes a difference. Mr. Milder is in politics in a respectable sort of way and, in spite of his timidity on the board, is a valuable friend and support. He works hard in the campaign and is chairman of the Public Relations Committee. He has been appointed on the Draft Board. Comment on Mr. Milder. You're a better man than you think you are.

Doctor James T. Fordel became interested when he was asked to give physical examinations to members of the physical department. He is a fairly regular attendant, strings along with the administration, although, as a strong church man, he voices an opinion that religious activities could be perked up. He doctors all the secretaries' families and never charges very much. He said to Joe Williams when his first baby came with his help, "I never send in a bill until all the children are born."

Mr. Arthur K. Somers. Please look him up in Chapter One.

Mr. O. H. Flintface. Mr. Flintface is . . . Mr. Flintface.

Mr. William Bentz is a very young man, named on the board to represent the Young Men's Division. He is a comer, but is overawed a little by the preponderance of the men who have more important places in the city. He speaks up, however, in behalf

of the membership when it seems to him that the board is becoming too conservative.

Mr. Thomas Culpert is a leader in public utilities. He is a new member, very technical and methodical. He thinks there is wasteful duplication of philanthropic and charitable work in Midville, and holds the firm belief that no such organization is ever well managed. He is new in town and got on the board by mistake. In the last meeting he appeared a little more mellow to the wonderment of the other members who have, however, seen the thing happen before. Not only is he learning that the Midville "Y" does have good business management, but there is a personal matter involved. His son strutted his stuff too much at high school and became unpopular. The alert Joe Williams took the thing in hand, put young Culpert on a boys' committee and things are better. Aside to Mr. Culpert: You'll come along, Sir, and your experience on the board may help you to become a better public utilities executive.

So goes the board. So also are members of innumerable committees: boys', young men and older, who volunteer or are enlisted. None of them is perfect but most of them are learning. Constantly there is a turnover as other interests develop and other opportunities arrive.

I submit a disjointed list of observations on our membership, purely personal:

1. I am glad we have a liberal and not too regimented base of membership. The value of this is that we keep a broad range of contact.
2. The danger is that many will join and use our

facilities and never become acquainted with our total purpose.

3. A good Y.M.C.A. is one that quickly finds specific obligations to spread among its membership.
4. It is more important to have membership activities well conducted than it is merely to have activities.
5. Well-conducted activities originate around the interests and obligations of those who take part, are largely directed by the groups themselves, and become helpful and constructive only as they are well managed. This calls often for experienced leadership.
6. The Y.M.C.A. should be an educative experience for all people in it, from the youngest boy to the board of directors.
7. It is a trite expression but nevertheless a true one that, so long as a member feels he is getting something *from* the Y.M.C.A., our work is not done. He should feel that he is a part *of* it.



What Holds the Y.M.C.A. Together?

ALTHOUGH the provincial Mr. Hiram Flintface of the Midville board will not be greatly concerned, no story of the Y.M.C.A. is anywhere near complete without a picture of the organizational machinery that holds the local Associations together and establishes them as a united effort across the United States and beyond. I mention Mr. Flintface's indifference because there is always the man who neither wants suggestions coming in from "outsiders" nor money going out to them. He simply cannot understand that, alone, the Midville Y.M.C.A. may not long exist as an effective agency.

Let me quickly assert that, in my opinion, the chief factor in holding all the local associations together and thus achieving national unity is not organization but ideas and ideals. Drop into almost any Y.M.C.A. and you will discover it working toward the same ends. Each one is at the service of boys and young men. To a certain extent it may go its own way but the force of this central idea comes sharply to the front when situations facing young men demand concerted action. Permit me to illustrate this.

I am writing these lines on the morning when newspapers are announcing the first numbers that were drawn in National Conscription. Camps are being prepared for selectees, and already the National Guard is mobilized. A vast army and a greatly increased navy are in the making. Government becomes more and more centralized to give authority, direction, and speed to militarization. In times like these democracy gives way to efficiency and the energies of a people merge toward armed defense. Watch, now, the Y.M.C.A. as it prepares to pursue its life-long purpose, that of following young men wherever they go. Remember that we have no centralized authority. Each local Y.M.C.A. is an autonomous unit. The overhead organization has no power of taxation, no enforceable method of collecting monies. Some national groups place supervision in one controlling board or directorship, which opens up branches in local communities, and have power to close them up if they do not meet national requirements, like chain stores. This is totally foreign to the Y.M.C.A. Therefore, as I review what has been done already,

even as the draftees are announced, I pay tribute not to organizational set-ups but to the unifying power of a common purpose. Here is what has been done.

- I. A National Council has already set up standards of practice.
- II. To each Association have gone information and suggestions.
- III. Local, State, and Area Committees have outlined duties.
- IV. A campaign is under way and money is being raised for Prisoner of War Work in Europe.
- V. In regular Army posts our leadership has been increased.
- VI. Money has been raised and surveys are being made to determine where we shall place huts outside Army encampments.
- VII. And, practically without exception, there has been adopted a practice in reference to the man in uniform. If he is a member, he may have his unexpired dues back or an extension of his membership after his term of enlistment is over, and whether he has been a member or not, his uniform is now his ticket of admission to the "Y."
- VIII. Probably as important as any of this are the plans for increased group and personal counseling to young men caught up in the bewildering conditions of today.

I repeat that here is an idea at work, so powerful that it uses any form of organization available. Not

organized for emergencies, nevertheless we meet them.

I hope I do not need to affirm here that we are not a military organization. Quite the opposite, we have worked for peace. In our Movement, as in the Nation, we have the conscientious objector, and grant him rights. We hold, in common with Christian agencies, that not by might is the Kingdom of God made. But we follow young men, and when they have gone to war, we have gone with them.

As much as I glorify this common purpose as the most significant factor in Association unity, I am frank to stress the necessity of something else. Purposes and ideals have to embody themselves in organization. Even the idea of following boys in the defense of their country needed an organization of national scope to carry on. Just as a body must have bones, and flesh needs a skeleton, unity, too, needs a framework. And that is why we have a "General Agency" system in the Y.M.C.A. Nor is its value chiefly in times of national emergency, but to meet general needs of the Movement as a whole. I'd like to review with you, in detail, why Midville needs the Y.M.C.A. in general, and the National Council and State or Area Committees in particular. So let's get back to Midville or, if you please, to your home town.

1. If repairs, alterations, or a new building are needed, there is a National Y.M.C.A. Building Bureau that knows more about Y.M.C.A. buildings than any one else.
2. If there is to be a finance campaign, there is a National Y.M.C.A. bureau for that.

3. If its membership is sagging, there are materials and leadership for that purpose.
4. If secretaries are getting in ruts, there are State and National Schools and conferences.
5. If State and National legislation is being considered, the Midville Y.M.C.A. is kept informed as to its relationship with government.
6. If a change in the staff is needed, the State or Area personnel man, who has available the National Bureau, will try to work it out.
7. If a new general secretary is required, the State man will come in, will review the situation, will suggest names out of carefully kept State and National files and will aid in securing a new man.
8. All of the latest developments in Boys' Work, in Young Men's Work, in Physical Work, in Industrial Work, in Religious Work, or in other Y.M.C.A. work is made available for any layman, committee, or staff worker.
9. The Y.M.C.A. has its own publishing house to meet the complex and changing needs of the local Association.
10. If the Midville "Y" wants a complete survey of any one department, or of all departments, State and Area staffs will provide it.
11. For members, under the leadership of these General Agencies, are conventions and conferences for grade-school boys, high-school boys, college students, young workmen, foremen and industrial leaders, held on State, Area and National scale.

12. Thus, if a boy stays in Midville, or if he leaves home to go to school or work or war, due to our National "hook-up," somewhere the "Y" is waiting for him. And to me that is the purpose to end all other purposes!

If you are bored by all this, let me assure you that, even so, the list is not complete. There is, for instance, a committee on Public Relationships that has great possibilities for each local Association. In four years the Y.M.C.A. will be a century old, and National, State and Area offices are working to make this a significant event. There is stress upon each local Association to use this opportunity to lift itself up to higher efficiency for a birthday party. I doubt whether Mr. Flintface of Midville listens to the National Radio Programs already put on the air by the Public Relations Committee, and he is probably unaware that records for broadcasting and movies for education are now available. Maybe he does and, anyway, they are.

Now how do a miscellaneous lot of autonomous Y.M.C.A.'s go about to set up this united service for themselves? The method is as simple as it could possibly be. Each State or Area is broken down into districts of 15,000 participating members. One Metropolitan city may have two districts, or it may take a number of small cities to make one. Each district is entitled to three members of the National Council, who will attend the Annual National Council meeting to represent their district in its legislative responsibilities. At this meeting the general policies

of the Associations are formed. A National Board of about forty members is the ad interim body to follow out the policies of the National Council. This Board employs a staff to provide National services. Obviously, except in a few specialized fields, the limited National Staff working from one or two places may not cover in detail the entire field. So we have the Area Committee, which is generally a group of the smaller States, or the State Committee in many of the larger ones. It is these Area or State Committees who maintain secretaries to do general visitation work. Thus, a State Committee may have a Boys' Work Secretary, General Program Secretary, Physical Director, or some other departmental secretary who regularly visits each local Association in his territory. In some States for purposes of integration the district representatives to the National Council are also members of the State Committee. In this way local Associations come together to provide for themselves services they need and to meet those problems that no one unit could solve by itself.

As in the local Y.M.C.A., this general pattern changes from time to time and, in fact, is always in a state of adjustment. It is by no means perfect, and, to an adherent of regimentation, may not always seem efficient. A better and more symmetrical chart can be made of an organization that, from a controlling center, establishes stations of controlled activity. Nothing, however, is more clear in the study of organizations than that for coverage of the field, originality in attack, and sensitiveness to local conditions,

a large degree of direction and autonomy must reside in the local operating unit.

Nor does the Area or State Committee desire legislative authority. It is kept on its toes because it has to make good through the means of services rendered. The fact is that the State Committees of an older day, and the National Council, were in existence before a great number of local Y.M.C.A.'s. The State Committee acted as the old family physician at their birth and now nurses the weaker ones through trying times. It was the pioneering spirit of these General Agencies that, on a national scale, pushed the Y.M.C.A. across the world and, on a State-wide basis, opened up new frontiers in cities and towns.

But enough of this organization business. Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Flintface. You have a question? You would like to know what all this costs. I don't blame you. In fact, it's my bread and butter too. You can figure it roughly this way. About two and a quarter per cent of each local Association's income, less deductions of costs in income-producing activities, is what most Associations are asked to give. Actually, Associations have never paid for their General Agency services in full, and interested individuals have come to the rescue. Even now there is great variation in the degree of support that Associations give. But you asked for it and I am telling you that there is a growing conviction that, autonomous or not, loyal units are increasingly paying their share of general agency obligations.

We need not dodge here a subject of common complaint in Association circles; namely, that the local

Y.M.C.A. is often swamped by innumerable appeals for this and that. Frankly, I see no help for it. An organization like ours would be blind if it could not discover pressing need for a hundred dollars where it can raise only one. It is our business to know needs, appeal for them, and spend what we can get. Admitting that often a mere list of responsibilities is so staggering that it almost paralyzes progress, I must insist that we face facts, and do what we can. Often we are apt to keep saying "There are too many appeals" with such fervency that we forget to help any one of them. Right now, for instance, before each Association, there are definite responsibilities. It takes courage merely to list them:

- The support of State and Area organizations
- The support of National organizations
- The support of Foreign work
- The appeal for our Colleges
- The appeal for War Prisoner Work
- The appeal for work with the men in service
- The local budget

But don't let these appeals get you down. You and I happen to be living in a day when people are giving their lives and their money. The Y.M.C.A. happens to be an organization that sticks around the center of things. It is all right to go down cellar to escape a bomb, but self-respect won't permit you and me to do it to dodge a worthy appeal. Natural science now asserts that an ostrich does not, as reputed, bury his head in the sand to escape his environment. I am

glad to hear it. Neither does a man. He welcomes all the appeals and helps where he can.

Finally, I wish I knew the author of the story I am about to tell. It is, I think, a classic. One day the Devil was out walking with one of his angels. Suddenly the angel became agitated with great fear. "Look," he said to his master, "there goes a man with a great idea to make this a better world." But Satan remained calm. He patted his aide on the shoulder and replied, "Don't worry, son, I know how to handle him. I'll catch up with him and suggest that he form an organization." And I am afraid the idea has merit. It is true that without organizations things are seldom done, but it is also true that good people form an organization to do something and end up by worshiping the organization. I own an old buck-saw that belonged to my father when he was a young man. Sixty years of sentiment cling to it and, for me, it is a priceless possession. The fact remains, however, that it is no longer any use at all for sawing wood. Neither its age, associations, nor experience has significance on a wood pile. Forgetting all else, one must continually ask of an organization, "Does it still saw wood?"

Today, for one reason or another, thousands of young men will step up to the desks or counters of Y.M.C.A.'s throughout the country. As they stand there, the Y.M.C.A. belongs to them. Any part or parcel of organization, in the name of method, efficiency, or anything else, that stands between the "Y" and the young men themselves is, as the story suggests, of devilish origin.

12

We Work Here Too

I HAVE suggested before that, when an organization sets its mind to be useful to people, it follows no pattern but goes where the people are. Variations in the Y.M.C.A. are numerous. Each of the projects listed here is certainly an illustration of free approach. In Midville you will see a partial picture if you look only at the "Y" on Main Street. Without much of a design, I am attempting in this chapter to list important parts of a total effort. They represent no different approach in purpose or philosophy, and they vary only as the Y.M.C.A. shapes itself to meet needs peculiar to the field.

RAILROAD MEN

Drop in for a moment at the Midville Railroad Y.M.C.A. The building is near the station, convenient to the men whom it serves. Its constituency is older than that of the City "Y," with about three-quarters of its members over thirty. There are dormitories, lounge rooms, and a restaurant, designed chiefly to be a home for men away from home. Many railroad men live at one end of a day's run, and need a reasonable and dependable place to eat and sleep at the other end. Railroad officials sense acutely that the atmosphere of the place must be wholesome and constructive and for that reason give liberal support to the Railroad "Y." To these systems, bringing together the peoples of the country, practically every person at one time or another trusts his life. There needs to be and there is a widespread confidence in the skill and dependability of employees. The tradition of railroading is safety, and the uneasy feeling that comes with the report of an accident is sombre evidence of an unusual faith in our transportation systems. Sometimes on a train you and I may grumble at the ventilation or over a few minutes' delay, but we never give a thought to the matter of safety. Personally, I am much more frightened when I prow around my own attic. One hundred and twenty-seven Railroad Y.M.C.A.'s make significant contribution to this morale, and are at the service of a membership of about 90,000 people. In the Midville "Y" sixty can sleep, and many more can eat or rest. Here are rooms and lounges and groups to use them. Here, for no

reason that I can state, the Bible class is often more in evidence than in city Associations. At one table you will see a couple of crack engineers playing checkers, and at another two brakemen are overbidding at pinochle. The secretary has to know how to handle men, and he should be a good housekeeper. The work expands and varies, often taking over community interests. Definitely, however, the Railroad Y.M.C.A., its board and secretaries are part of the System, which is, I think, as it should be.

In the shower room, Jim McGrath and brakeman Tierney are discussing the state of the nation as they remove the grime of the day's work. Says Jim, "Do you think the government will take over the railroads?" Says brakeman Tierney, "If they do, it'll ruin them." And that, I hope, settles that. It has nothing to do with the episode recorded above, but the expenditure of the Transportation Y.M.C.A.'s in 1939 was about \$3,643,600.

WORKERS

Y.M.C.A. activities along industrial lines date back a good many years. Much has been accomplished, but it has not had the attention it deserved. The industrial program is more closely tied into the local Association than Transportation work, but is in many ways a special venture. Its outstanding achievement is, perhaps, with the 130 foremen's clubs, which are part of the program of local Y.M.C.A.'s. Through national and state leadership these clubs unite to help individual foremen and to build better industrial relationships. Employing companies are interested and

help financially, but too few local Associations go at the thing seriously. Some may differ, but I am disturbed that we have not been so effective with young workers in industry as we have with the white-collar class. Our foremen's clubs are a fine effort, but we could make a vital contribution to those under the rank of foremen, whose only contact is through an occasional membership or some kind of Industrial Athletic League. The Midville "Y," typical of hundreds of medium-size cities, produces these results in its Industrial Program:

1. An educative and morale-developing Foremen's Club.
2. A close tie-in with industrial leaders, which incidentally makes job finding much easier.
3. A contact with the worker which grows out of its athletic league, and the worker's knowledge that the "Y" is interested.
4. More worker members in the total program of the Y.M.C.A.

A National Secretary gives full time to this important phase, working through State and Area offices, who in turn help local Associations organize in the most strategic fields. We are doing well, I think, but here is a chance for pioneering. Perhaps I should tell you what happened at Midville. When the State man and the local general secretary were visiting industrial leaders to secure their backing in organizing the foremen's club, they called on Amos Y. Swink, who owns a factory and employs about 300 men. I am sorry to report that Mr. Swink did about everything

but kick his callers out on the sidewalk. He said, "If you get these foremen together, it will be another effort to hold up us business men. I think the least we organize and the least we talk about relationships, the better. Let sleeping dogs lay. Good afternoon." I have left out the adjectives. The fact is that the "sleeping dogs" will not long sleep, and the hopeful thing is that Mr. Swink is the exception.

As a matter of record, I should add that in a few places where towns have built themselves around huge industrial plants, companies have given Y.M.C.A. buildings and pay much of the operating costs.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Y.M.C.A. is at work in one way or another in 192 colleges, with some of the local groups calling themselves Y.M.C.A.'s and others "Student Christian Associations," and others by some other name. They affiliate in national unity, however, and are definitely a student movement. On some campuses they have a building and on others just a secretary, and in still others they have neither. The membership total is about 61,000, but there are many classifications of membership so I am not sure what the figures signify. But, from personal observation, I am sure that here is a tremendously worth-while work in a fruitful field. More than any other part of the "Y," the students are the liberal crusaders. They embarrass the parent body now and then by stepping up for peace, advanced economic ideas, or even too much sex education; but they are among the campus leaders in Christian thought and action and they tackle real jobs. Recently

they sent \$27,000 for student relief in the Far East and they also sent one of their own members from Kansas University over to China for a year to visit university centers. They bring outstanding lecturers and crusaders to the campus, and themselves hold many conferences. They are definitely Christian both in the personal and social implications of the term, and they speak with great freedom. They do practical things on the campus and hold the respect of the student body. I'd rather have my son active in a college Y.M.C.A. than have him belong to the best fraternity, and I hope, when he gets as old as I am, he will cling to more of the so-called "radical" ideas than I have been able to keep.

There is a far-reaching world-wide hook-up through the N.I.C.C. and the W.S.C.F. When first I heard these initials glibly used by a student, it embarrassed me to ask what he meant, so I should inform you that they refer to the National Intercollegiate Christian Council and the World's Student Christian Federation.

COUNTRY FOLKS

About half of the people in the United States live in communities of under 2,500 population. The Y.M.C.A., expert in urban work, is nowhere nearly so good in towns and villages. Only 5 per cent of our membership are in these smaller centers and only 10 per cent of our Hi-Y Clubs are "from the country." I am disturbed about these figures, and I hope you will be. I am hopeful, however, because leaders in this field have a conviction to move forward, and I

think the delay has been caused because no successful plan of action has been devised. I am sure one will come, however, because the country boy still does not have the advantages of his city cousin, and in my opinion, dollar for dollar, town and country work is our most productive venture. This is the way it works. A group of laymen are called together from adjacent towns, a board is formed and a secretary employed. He organizes Hi-Y Clubs and Gra-Y Clubs and Young Men's Clubs. At first he must be both the program man and money raiser. He brings speakers to the schools, churches, and other organizations. He gets hold of a camp if he can. He runs educational tours to Washington, or across the continent. He holds conferences where boys learn of colleges, vocations, and religion. His program is a group affair and he uses whatever gym, school, or church will give him a room. He has more groups than a city "Y" with a staff of three or four men, and all the money he raises goes directly to program. Finances come with difficulty because his constituency is scattered and lay leadership is hard to develop. But his boys are the neediest and his field the least occupied.

I have described the typical town and country unit, but there are other methods of reaching out into country areas. Some city Y.M.C.A.'s break over in small neighboring communities, and, now and then, have a Town and Country Secretary on the city staff. In other fields, States assume the responsibility for coverage, and with success. Unfortunately, this work calls for our ablest secretaries and has small resources with which to secure them.

One time I sat in at the death of a fine piece of town and country work. There had been an able secretary, but laymen were slow to back him up. He had spent too much time with boys who needed him and not enough time with men who had the money. His annual budget was \$4,000—not a large sum to raise in eight towns in the field where he worked. It died. As we made plans to enter its demise in the records, I am afraid I didn't give much technical assistance. I was thinking of the kids who wouldn't have gone to college if the secretary had not kept after them, and of the small schools that depended on him for so many things.

Now and then you hear people talk of pioneering as if the day for it is past and gone in our American movement. "All that was part of an earlier day. The field is now covered." Such talk is a complete negation of the Y.M.C.A. method and spirit. The harvest is ready and waiting, but the pioneers are few.

SOLDIERS AND SAILORS

By National Council action the Y.M.C.A. is an agency for peace. Even though all local Associations do not enter into a comprehensive peace program, their delegates, in National Council, have not hesitated to state their convictions. Let me quote from the findings of the 1939 Council Meeting:

"By the National Council in October, 1939—an Action on Responsibility in Relation to the War Situation—

1. The National Council of Young Men's Christian

Associations of the United States, with deepest distress of mind and spirit, take note of the spread of war throughout the world.

2. In the face of this fact, the Council affirms the following convictions:

- that the Fatherhood of God extends to all races, nations, and classes of mankind and that it is His Will, as revealed in the example and teachings of Christ, that men should learn to live together in peace and harmony.

- that the adjustment of conflicting interests in the human family, of whatever kind, should be sought by peaceful means and upon Christian principles.

- that these principles should be given effect through practicable working arrangements which nations and groups may use in arriving at solutions of their problem without resort to armed force, violence, or other methods of coercion.

It should, accordingly, be the working policy of the Young Men's Christian Associations in their local and national expression to support to the utmost all efforts aimed at spreading these ideals and achieving these goals, particularly at this time of heightening tensions and bitterness of feeling among the peoples of the earth.

The Council accepts these as fundamental principles to guide the efforts of its boards, committees, and staff."

Because these pages, as I said in the preface, are unofficial and purely personal, I may be permitted an observation. In my judgment it is a solemn obligation of any Christian organization to work and pray for peace and I am convinced that in the long run our greatest contribution to a new world will be in our efforts toward peace rather than in our service in war time. There are people who hold these convictions so dearly that they look with suspicion on our Army and Navy associations.

It seems to me, however, that until some other organization appears to do what the Y.M.C.A. has done, we have a task ahead of us. Because I write in October, 1940, with expansion of our Army and Navy work already under way, it may be well to review a bit of background.

It is a curious truth that, until the middle of the last century, neither society nor church had shown great concern for the physical or moral welfare of the fighting man. At the time of the Crimean campaign in 1854, two factors brought on an almost miraculous result. One was that Florence Nightingale's work added a new name to the roster of the immortals. The other was a pamphlet written by Monsieur Henri Dunant, which set forth the horrors of a battlefield so vividly that something had to be done. The result was the Red Cross. Dunant was an outstanding Y.M.C.A. leader in Europe. It is with the Red Cross spirit that the Y.M.C.A. must look on its work with the Army and Navy.

Seven years later the New York City Y.M.C.A. organized a committee to work with young men

engaged in the war between the States. A little later in the same year, 1861, Associations of the North formed the U. S. Christian Mission to promote "the spiritual good of the soldiers, and incidentally, their intellectual improvement and social and physical comfort." Since then the "Y" has served through the different wars. Since then, also, there has been developed a peace-time service until now there are over forty Y.M.C.A.'s at Army posts and Naval reservations. They have no membership or membership fees, but they do organize clubs and groups like city Associations. There is, for instance, the Triangle Service League, and a young seaman is likely to find a branch in any port. The educational emphasis is stressed in these Army and Navy Y.M.C.A.'s, and finds a growing place in the increasing quality of young men who enlist, but recreational, religious and guidance programs are also developed. Ten Associations are on Army posts but most of them operate off the reservation. War and Navy Departments assume responsibility for recreational activities on posts or stations, but officers of all ranks encourage outside "Y's."

Y'S MEN'S CLUB WORK

Although this is a feature of the city Association, I find I have mentioned it at no other place and I insert it here to illustrate how in the framework of our organization a movement may be formed. The Y's Men's Club is made up of young business men members of the Y.M.C.A., selected representatively after the manner of Rotary and Kiwanis. It is entirely a lay movement and has met in annual national con-

vention since 1922. There are about 175 chapters, some in Europe, South America, India, and other countries. At their best, they support many good causes and train many efficient leaders. At their worst, like clubs of other kinds, they meet to eat and complain about the food. Even then they are likable.

CAMPS

Last year, 112,912 boys were shipped off to the Y.M.C.A. camps in the country beside some lake. Of these, 112,911 forgot to bring something that they needed and brought along a number of things they didn't need. If you add the girls and the leaders, the figure becomes nearly 200,000. The Y.M.C.A. owns 364 camp sites and uses a number of others. It's a great industry, full of fun and betterment. In recent years much has been done to raise camping standards and there was room for it. In Midville it's easier to raise money for camp than anything else, particularly if the underprivileged are served. I am glad we have all these camps but I am glad, too, that we have got over the idea that anyone can run one in any way and still make it a good experience in the life of the boy. If there is a director who knows his business, if he gets together a good crew of leaders, if they take their jobs seriously and set up a well-balanced program, if moral, physical and social safeguards are set up, a camp is a swell place for a boy, and he will have a good time if his parents let him alone. Our average, I think, is high. I have visited in the last few years about fifty camps, and I wouldn't mind a son of mine being in about forty-three of them.

COLORED MEN AND BOYS

There are 54 Associations having 45,658 members and spending \$1,008,000 in 1939. I am sorry to be forced to put a special paragraph here about a work that carries on just about as all the other Y.M.C.A.'s do. But the practice of separate work for Negroes is of long standing and probably will continue to be. I like these questions taken from the *Association Year Book*: "Do such policies have a solid Christian basis? What is the prospect of their modification at some future time? What experience has there been among the Associations with a less absolute policy and with what results?" Here are grave, critical queries. If, with our contacts, we make only meager contribution to the solution of this issue, God help us!

In the meantime, let me say that I know some Y.M.C.A.'s for Negroes that stand out as cordial, intelligent, efficient Associations, and I know Negro secretaries and laymen than whom there are no better. But I am still sorry these paragraphs have to be segregated.

WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ungallantly, I am forced to admit that the Young Men's Christian Association did not originally propose to the ladies. They were forced on us by the very nature of things and for a while we were like the hangers-on in a barber shop when the female contingency invaded even there. Above all else, the local Y.M.C.A. is realistic. So ultimately it faced up to conditions. One condition is that in many smaller

cities, there are not means or facilities for separate programs. Besides, someone is always asking, "Why separate, anyway?" The other condition is that in larger cities, boys ask, "Where are the girls?" Thus, out of reality, has it come about that perhaps the fastest-growing phase of a traditional men's movement is the advent of women. The figures are interesting. Over 9 per cent of our membership is made up of women and girls; 13 per cent of group attendance is the same. Furthermore, Mrs. Grundy, we have 13,744 mixed groups, which is three times more than we had two years ago. Camps, colleges, Hi-Y's, discussion clubs, swimming parties, committees, staffs—as between the sexes, they are all mixed up. In Midville, girls take over the building one day a week; in other places newer buildings are designed for women's use. On the Midville board there is often a debate as to the effect of these activities, with two or three members questioning a further extension of mixed programs. To these theorizing brothers, a more practical member always ends the debate with this beautiful bit of realism, "Well, they are here, aren't they?" And with this I also drop the matter.

Here in one brief chapter are condensed significant examples of the Y.M.C.A. idea. No one of them is treated adequately. All of them are significant only as you think in terms of people: a young railroad man away from home, a foreman trying to better himself, a student meeting the issues of this hectic day, a boy in a little town, a chap who has just joined the Army, a girl in a Hi-Y Club, a boy leaving home for the first

time to go to camp, a young Negro with emotions that you and I know nothing about. Unless you see these people walking through these paragraphs, these words describe just another dreary and futile piece of organization.

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Abroad

TO MY mind, the greatest single venture of the American Y.M.C.A. has been its World Service or "Foreign Work." Perhaps "Abroad" is the better word to use. The "Y" was born in London, came early to Canada and the United States, and from there moved round the world. In the Midville "Y" there are people who miss completely the thrill of this adventure. The loss, of course, is theirs. In these few pages, I do poor service to a great piece of work as I touch only a few of the high spots of what is no less than a thrilling story.

It was in October, 1889, when distance meant more

than it does now, that two North American secretaries left New York—one for Tokyo, Japan, and the other for Madras, India. Already in these centers the seeds of the Y.M.C.A. had been sown. These men and others took with them not only the purpose and method of the Association but one other very important conviction: namely, that each Y.M.C.A. abroad become completely indigenous to its own soil. They would help, but they would not impose American leadership and points of view in foreign places. More than anything else, this impresses us as the explanation of our marked success. By 1910, when the White House Conference, through the courtesy of President Taft, set out to raise \$1,515,000 as a contribution toward forty-nine different buildings, we had become a vibrant Christian International Movement with our roots deep in the soils of the leading countries of the world. From America came money and leadership, but a leadership determined to turn directing powers over to native sons. So successful was this venture that after fifty years of work this paragraph could be written in the Anniversary Report:

“For every national who became a Y.M.C.A. secretary ten have become unofficial secretaries giving volunteer service as board and committee members. The imprint of the Y.M.C.A. upon individuals and its influence upon the life of countries where it has been at work can be more readily appreciated in terms of the following figures: It is estimated that today there are 52,000 business and professional men giving

volunteer service in Y.M.C.A.'s in the thirty-two countries where the North American Associations are co-operating; that within the span of fifty years more than 10,000 nationals have been enlisted as secretaries for varying periods; 500,000 or more business and professional men have served as board and committee members; a million young men have served as leaders of group activities; and ten million or more boys and young men have been enrolled as members."

During the period of these achievements, the World Service Staff had reached its peak in 1925, with 229 representatives in thirty-one countries. The depression years have taken terrific toll and the wars have played havoc with men and movements but between the lines of every World Service Report I have ever seen are evidences of influences that may not long be halted and never die. I like, in particular, this further paragraph from the Fiftieth Anniversary Report:

"For the real heart of the enterprise—the drama, pathos, discouragement, friendship, hope, encouragement, love, inspiration and spiritual power—lies in human lives—in the lives of millions of individual boys and men and families who have been touched and influenced by warm Christian friendship and understanding; in the pioneering spirit and personal devotion and sacrifice of 529 American and Canadian secretaries who have (1) represented American Y.M.C.A. experience and good will (2) identified them-

selves with the people and life in countries to which they were assigned (3) served as members of an international staff engaged in building a world-wide fellowship; in the several thousand nationals who have believed so deeply in what the Y.M.C.A. can do for their countries that they have joined the ranks of its secretaries; in the 50,000 men of every conceivable profession and social and religious viewpoint who have devoted time and money to introducing, developing, and extending the Association movement in their countries."

In this little book there is not space to visit every country and trace the significance of the Y.M.C.A. at work in it. A volume could be prepared about Japan alone, or Korea, or the Philippines, or South America, or India, or Egypt, or Turkey, or Siam, or some other place. Seeds sown by residents who come from other places, or by other methods, international secretaries moving in to see what could be done, accumulations of little groups of interested and influential citizens (in my Sunday-school days we called them Pagans!), programs started in cities and towns and schools and colleges, buildings erected, native secretaries trained, international secretaries coming back to raise funds, young Americans saying "Sure, I'll go to India"—these make up the process and paint the picture. At one end of the row is John R. Mott, for instance, looking across the world, getting this man to go to China, getting that man to pay to send him there. Here are a doctor, an engineer, a minister. Here is a new

graduate with a life to give. Here are thousands who arise to catch the romance and urge of a great mission. Here are wars and rebellions and famines and persecution. Here in these last few fateful years are nations taken over by tyrants and peoples thrown into exile. And in Midville here is a man who says, "I'm not interested. We have our own to look after." Here is another who says, "Boys are boys wherever they are. We had better chip in." Here, also, is Miss Minervia Hopkins, who cared for her mother and later her brother and never got around the world to see what the "Y" is doing. But John R. Mott told about it one evening, and her brother gave him a check of no mean value. So she sends a thousand dollars a year now and as she reads of the invasion of China she hopes that some poor boy is being helped.

Let us take China as an illustration. Forty-five years ago a "Y" man entered Tientsin. In 1937 here are the results:

39	City Y.M.C.A.'s
112	Student Associations
33	Y.M.C.A. buildings
3	Conference centers, value \$7,743,946 (Chinese)
45,517	Members of the Y.M.C.A.
400,000	Participants
18,619	Students in our educational work
\$1,000,000	(American money) given by constituents
256	Chinese secretaries
12	Secretaries from North America

As I write these statistics I am telling myself that they are inadequate indeed to tell the story as I'd like to recite it. Remember the floods, famines, epidemics and economic instabilities of China, through which works like the Y.M.C.A. had to emerge. And, now, War. After two years of death and destruction let's take another inventory as of June, 1939.

These two years left China with 10,000,000 orphans and 60,000,000 homeless people, with wreckage that affects everything but the soul of the people.

- 25 City Associations functioning on restricted basis in occupied territory
- 28 College Associations handicapped the same way
- 3 Buildings burned
- 4 Buildings destroyed or badly damaged by bombs
- 5 Buildings occupied by invading forces
- 4 Buildings looted
- 4 Associations suspended
- \$700,000 Property losses
- 5 out of 12 Junior school Associations abandoned
- 23 Associations with over 90 per cent of their constituencies vanished
- 45 per cent of the Chinese staff scattered

And yet the "Y" goes on, in spite of handicaps and losses. For each Association closed, a new one has opened in another place. Here is the result:

Number of Associations.....	135
Total Membership	34,822
Chinese Secretaries	162
Number of groups.....	551
Enrolment in groups	25,151
Enrolment of students	18,446
Attendance at lectures	529,841
Attendance at emergency events for soldiers.....	6,327,463
Secretaries: Nationals	162
War Workers	444
North American	11

That is but one story. In similar terms could the story of Poland be told. I promised that I would make this book neither an eulogy nor a sales talk, but you will permit me to say that if the citizens of Midville could grasp the significance of World Service and the need of support to keep a world-wide brotherhood alive, two things would result immediately. They would help where they could and they would not be so nearly floored by their own problems. You can't watch China without getting courage yourself.

I hope you will read carefully and imaginatively the objectives for future planning of a World Service unafraid:

1. To help, in co-operation with progressive, brotherly influential elements in other lands, to develop self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating Y.M.C.A.'s in those lands.

(As sound basically today as in 1889 when the International Convention gave the World Service program its commission, using the following words:

" . . . The chief aim . . . should be to train and develop Christian young men in the

principles and methods of Association work, and to plant self-sustaining Y.M.C.A.'s . . .")

2. To make these Y.M.C.A.'s fellowships for the development of personality after the pattern of Jesus Christ, and centers of expression in life and service of the Christian Gospel in all areas of concern to youth.
3. As a chief means of carrying out the above aims, to help develop indigenous lay and staff leadership in these countries.
4. To assist in the development in each country of a National Alliance through which our own relationships with that country are maintained. These Alliances become, in due time, constituent members of the World's Alliance.
5. To build channels of intercommunication through which men and boys of our own and other lands are sharing back and forth convictions, aspirations and experience.
6. To develop a network of world-wide relationships which transcend existing social, religious, and cultural barriers and conflicts and through them to make an indispensable contribution toward the building of a world Christian community.
7. To help American and Canadian Associations to participate in a distinctive world-wide Christian enterprise, to rise above provincialism and to make their own youth intelligently informed in the international realm.

The Postman Rings Again

ONE March morning, postman Tom Murphy was delivering nine identical letters to nine substantial homes on Riverdale Avenue in Midville, New York. It could have been, however, any other postman on any similar street in practically any American city of over 15,000 population. In the upper left corner of each envelope was stamped a red triangle, along the lines of which were printed these words: "Body, Mind, Spirit." He came to the home of Miss Minervia Hopkins, who, you may remember, is over eighty years old.

He was disturbed to see a doctor's car parked in front of the house. Miss Hopkins was very sick. As quietly as he could, the postman walked up the steps. He had delivered mail here these many, many years, but it looked like the end. He hated to think of the place changing hands. He didn't ring the bell. Miss Hopkins' secretary seemed to be waiting for the letters. He nodded toward the car and said, "Isn't Miss Hopkins any better?" The secretary said softly, "I guess it's about over. She's. . . ." She couldn't finish. Even more quietly the postman walked down the steps.

So this was the end. The postman's mind went back through the years. He recalled her brother; he remembered Miss Minervia for two decades. Oh, well, people had to die, even kindly, friendly people like Miss Hopkins. Postmen like himself who walk the same street, year after year, must expect changes, but when they come they make you lonesome. Take Miss Hopkins now, even in late years when she no longer went out, she was evident in so many places, the Home for Old Folks, the Salvation Army, the hospital. It's people like Miss Hopkins that make a city a home. The postman had read in the paper that only a couple of months ago she established a fund for boys' membership at the "Y." She should have had boys of her own. Leave it to Joe Williams to make sure of boys' memberships. Odd, to call a person dead, who would continue to be around Midville for generations to come, in so many ways and places.

The postman, absentmindedly, nearly bumped into

Mr. Arthur Winters, gray, stooped a little, always cordial.

"Good morning, Tom."

Tom said, "Miss Hopkins is very low."

"I'm going over there for a minute," replied Mr. Winters.

The postman went on. You don't have to have money to help a town. Take Mr. Winters now. Once he was rich and gave plenty. Now everyone said he was terribly hard up. But rich or poor, he was respected. The city admired Mr. Winters. Yes, sir, men referred to him when urging others to keep their chins up. That was something to give a town, too.

The postman halted with a jerk. What were things coming to with him walking along in a fog and forgetting the mail? By George, he must be getting old, himself. He turned sharply and hurried back. "Better keep my mind on my work. That makes a town, too," he thought to himself. Everybody and everything make a town. All night a policeman had patrolled the neighborhood. Early this morning a milkman had gone by and a member of the Hi-Y, on his bike, had delivered the *Midville Dispatch*. From all over the city teachers were converging to the school houses, doctors were making calls, the factories were filling with workers, and motormen were steering noisy trolleys along the streets. A town needs everyone: musicians and ministers, street cleaners and clerks, bankers and plumbers, builders and postmen. They need to be good, too, and reliable and friendly. That's the big thing, mused Tom Murphy. They need to be good and have character.

He went up Mr. Mike McTigue's front step and sorted out the mail, noticing the red triangle, Body, Mind, Spirit. Another annual appeal. He hoped they would get their money. Stuffing the letters into the slot with more hurry than usual, he tried to snap back into the routine of things. He must not waste any more time, dreaming about the town and its people. After all, he had work to do. He rang the bell.

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